NATION

5 killed as rains disrupt normal life in T'gana

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Sensex sinks 706pts amid tariff terror

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Asia Cup: Pak not participating due to security reasons, says Tirkey

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 29 AUGUST 2025 | FRIDAY | BENGALURU | 5 RABIUL AWWAI, 1447 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 235 | Pages: 8

6 dead as KSRTC bus crashes near Kerala border

MANGALURU/KASARAGOD, 28 AUG

Six people, including four from a family, were killed and seven others injured when a KSRTC bus bound for Mangaluru from Kasaragod suffered brake failure and crashed into a bus shelter and an auto-rickshaw at Talapady on the Karnataka - Kerala border on Thursday, police said. The spot of the accident is located on the border of the Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka and Kasaragod district of Kerala. Five adults and a minor girl were killed, and the four adults belonged to a family. The accident occurred at around 1.15 pm, they added. A preliminary investigation has been launched to determine the cause of the brake failure, they further stated. *—PTI*

Class 9 girl gives birth in Yadgir's govt hostel toilet

YADGIR, 28 AUG

A Class 9 student gave birth to a boy inside a government school hostel's toilet in Yadgir. Police suspect that the girl was sexually assaulted. The incident occurred in Shahapur on Wednesday at around 2.30pm. She has been shifted to Shahapur Government Hospital, where both the mother and the newborn are healthy and stable, Dr Padmanand Gaikwad, the hospital's administrative medical officer, told SALAR NEWS. The Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) has ordered an inquiry into the matter. The school and hostel administration have claimed that they were unaware of the girl's pregnancy. However, police have registered a case and ordered the dismissal of the school's principal, hostel warden and nurse. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

'NO SPAT WITH BJP; NEVER SAID NETAS MUST QUIT AT 75'

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat said there is "no quarrel" with the BJP-led government. He also dismissed Opposition's allegations that RSS makes decisions for the BJP.

"We have good coordination with the Centre and states. There are systems that have internal contradictions... There is no quarrel in any way... we have good coordination with every government," he said during the centenary celebrations of RSS on Thursday.

He also asserted he had never stated that he would retire or someone else should retire at 75. This put at rest speculation over his recent remarks on retirement, which was seen as a reference to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Both Modi and Bhagwat turn 75 next month.

"I am eighty years old and the Sangh will ask me to go run a Shakha. I will have to go. I cannot say… I want to enjoy the retirement benefits. There are no benefits in Sangh," he said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

US blames India for Ukraine conflict, calls it 'Modi's war'

Navarro says road to peace is via New Delhi

NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 28 AUG

White House Trade Adviser Peter Navarro has accused India of fuelling the Ukraine conflict, calling it "Modi's war" and alleging that New Delhi is "helping feed the Russian war machine" through continued purchases of discounted Russian oil.

In an interview with Bloomberg, Navarro, who served as Senior Counsellor to President Donald Trump, said the road to peace in Ukraine "runs partly right through New Delhi". He argued that US consumers, businesses, and workers are suffering due to India's high tariffs and its support of Russian energy exports.

"Everybody in America loses because of what India is doing. Taxpayers lose because we've got to fund Modi's war," Navarro said.

The remarks follow the US's imposition of an additional 25% tariff on Indian goods, taking total tariffs to 50 per cent. as a penalty for India's ongoing imports of Russian oil. These duties came into effect on Wednesday.

Navarro said the added tariffs could be withdrawn if India stopped purchasing Russian crude. "It's real easy. Just stop buying Russian oil," he said, calling India "a mature democracy" but accusing it of denying having some of the world's highest tariffs.

He further claimed Indian refiners buy discounted Russian oil, refine it in partnership with Russian entities, and sell it at a premium globally, indirectly aiding Moscow's war effort. "Russia uses the money to fund its war machine and kill more Ukrainians," he said.

Navarro also criticised India's geopolitical stance, stating: "India is the world's biggest democracy. It should act like one and not side with authoritarians."

On China, Navarro said both India and China need to halt Russian oil imports. "You stop India and China from buying Russian oil tomorrow, and the war is over," he claimed.

There was no immediate response from New Delhi. *—PTI*

Govt mulls ₹25K cr aid to exporters amid US tariffs

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The Centre is working on a Rs 25,000-crore support package to cushion Indian exporters from the impact of the US imposing 50 per cent tariffs on select goods from 27 August. The duties will hit labour-intensive sectors like textiles, leather, shrimp, machinery, and gems.

Key proposals include a moratorium on export loans, emergency credit for MSMEs, resumption of interest subsidy, and extension of the export realisation period. Exporters have sought relief on liquidity, easier credit, and principal repayment pauses for one year.

The government plans to launch an Export Promotion Mission under Budget provisions for FY25–31 through two schemes, Niryat Protsahan (Rs 10,000+ crore) and Niryat Disha (Rs 14,500+ crore). Officials are also engaging with exporters on diversification and new FTAs.

- India's exports to the US rose 21.6 per cent to $33.53 billion in April–July 2025. The US remains India's largest trading partner, accounting for 20 per cent of total exports.

India's exports to the US rose 21.6 per cent to $33.53 billion in April–July 2025. The US remains India's largest trading partner, accounting for 20 per cent of total exports. *—PTI*

More on Pages 3, 6 and 7

SECRET LETTER FROM XI RESET INDIA-CHINA TIES?

BEIJING, 28 AUG

A previously undisclosed letter from Chinese President Xi Jinping has reportedly prompted a quiet reset in India-China relations, just days before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to China. According to Indian officials cited by Bloomberg, Xi reached out directly to Indian President Droupadi Murmu in March amidst escalating US trade tensions with China. The letter, described as cautious and deliberate, expressed concern over US economic actions and suggested a new channel for diplomatic engagement.

As Washington's trade pressure intensified, New Delhi began re-engaging with Beijing by June. The report outlines a thaw in relations, with both nations agreeing to revive efforts to address longstanding border disputes – the first significant progress since the deadly 2020 Galwan Valley clash. Modi's visit to China this weekend marks his first trip in seven years. The shifting dynamics could influence the broader strategic balance in Asia, as the US has historically relied on India to counter China's influence. Carnegie Endowment's Ashley Tellis remarked, "Trump is indeed the great peacemaker – he deserves the credit." *—Agencies*

PASSWORDS OF 2.5 BILLION GMAIL ACCOUNT LEAKED

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Google has issued a major security alert warning that nearly 2.5 billion Gmail accounts may have been exposed in a large-scale data theft campaign between 8 August and 18 August.

According to Google's advisory, attackers gained access to Gmail data by exploiting compromised authentication tokens from third-party integrations. Once inside, they systematically pulled large volumes of account data, including usernames, email addresses, login details, and in some cases, stored credentials connected to other cloud services.

The attackers reportedly searched for sensitive information such as Amazon Web Services (AWS) keys, enterprise login URLs, and Snowflake access tokens.

While Google has not confirmed how many individual users' data was directly abused, the company said the scale of the breach means Gmail accounts worldwide could be affected. However, there is no evidence that Gmail's core systems were compromised. Google has asked its Gmail users to reset passwords and enable two-factor authentication (2FA) if not already active. Users should also check recent login activity in Gmail settings to identify suspicious access attempts. *—Salar News*

Hindu population dropped to just 15% in Sambhal: Report

LUCKNOW, 28 AUG

A judicial commission probing the November 2024 Sambhal violence has submitted its report to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, highlighting a sharp decline in the Hindu population due to repeated communal riots.

The 450-page report, yet to be made public, reportedly states that the Hindu population in Sambhal has fallen from 45 per cent in 1947 to just 15–20 per cent today, while Muslims now make up nearly 85 per cetn. The commission attributes this shift to communal violence and the "politics of appeasement." The panel, headed by retired Allahabad High Court judge Devendra Kumar Arora, with former DGP Arvind Kumar Jain and ex-IAS officer Amit Mohan Prasad, was formed on 28 November 2024.

It investigated the 24 November clashes near Shahi Jama Masjid during an ASI-monitored survey, which left four dead and 29 policemen injured. FIRs were filed against SP MP Ziaur Rahman Barq, mosque committee head Zafar Ali, and 2,750 unidentified people. *—PTI*

17 dead as illegal building falls in Palghar

PALGHAR, 28 AUG

The death toll in the collapse of an allegedly unauthorised building at Virar in Maharashtra's Palghar district has risen to 17 with the discovery of two more bodies, officials said on Thursday.

Police have arrested the builder of the four-storey structure, Ramabai Apartment, after the Vasai Virar Municipal Corporation (VVMC) lodged a complaint, they said.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced an assistance of Rs 5 lakh to the kin of the deceased.

The 13-year-old building, housing nearly 50 flats, collapsed on an adjacent vacant tenement at Vijay Nagar in Virar area of Palghar, adjoining Mumbai, at 12.05 am on Wednesday. Six others, who were injured and rescued, were undergoing treatment in various hospitals, according to an official from the Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation. *—PTI*

Rescue personnel carry a body retrieved from the rubble after a building collapsed in Palghar on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

>>>More on Page 4

East Champaran district police on Thursday released the photographs of all three Pakistani nationals **PHOTO: PTI**

Bihar on alert as 3 Pak terrorists enter state

PATNA, 28 AUG

A high-security alert has been sounded across Bihar following inputs suggesting that three terrorists from Pakistan have entered the state through Nepal, an official said on Thursday.

Bihar Police headquarters has also issued the names and photographs of the terrorists, belonging to the banned terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed. It is suspected that all of them reached Bihar via Nepal through Araria.

Bihar DGP Vinay Kumar said, "Yes, a general alert has been sounded across the state. All district police and several other wings of the Bihar Police have been directed to maintain a close watch and 'extraordinary' vigil to thwart any attempt by anti-national elements by intensifying area domination patrolling and search operations. The security has already been heightened in the state."

When specifically asked about the inputs suggesting three terrorists from Pakistan have entered the state through Nepal, the DGP said, "I can only say that a general alert has been sounded across the state". He refused to divulge more details about the alert.

Meanwhile, East Champaran district police on Thursday released the photographs of all three Pakistani nationals and announced a reward of Rs 50,000 each for providing credible information leading to their arrest.

Security has been beefed at all places where footfall of tourists was high, like Mahabodhi Temple Complex (Bodh Gaya), Viswa Shanti Stupa (Rajgir), Mahaveer temple and Takhat Sri Harimandir Ji, Patna Sahib (Patna). Besides, security has been enhanced at all airports in the state, sources said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

'Nuke India' scribbled on US school shooter's gun

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, 28 AUG

A shooter who opened fire at a Minneapolis Catholic School, killing two children, had 'Nuke India' and kill 'Donald Trump; written on one of the guns, according to video footage of the alleged arsenal used by him.

The shooter, Robin Westman, 23, from Minnesota, opened fire in the Annunciation Catholic School on Wednesday killing two children aged 8 and 10 and injuring 17 people. Westman then allegedly killed himself.

Video footage circulating online allegedly showed Westman displaying his ammunition, rifles and guns. 'Nuke India' is written in white on one of the guns.

Journalist Laura Loomer said, in a post on X, that the Minnesota shooter had

"Mashallah" and "Nuke India" written on his gun. He also wrote "Israel Must Fall". "Clearly influenced by anti-Indian and Anti-Jewish Islamic propaganda. Not really a shocker to see a person like this living in Ilhan Omar's district kill Catholics," Loomer said. Ilhan Omar, a Democrat, is the US representative for Minnesota's 5th congressional district since 2019. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 6

CLAIMS STUDY

Indians die 3.5 yrs earlier due to air pollution

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The annual average particulate pollution levels in India exceed the WHO guideline and even citizens living in the cleanest regions of the country could live 9.4 months longer if the air quality met global standards.

The Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago's (EPIC) 2025 report said PM2.5 concentrations in India in 2023 were higher than in 2022. These levels are more than eight times higher than the prescribed WHO guideline and reducing them to permanently meet the global standard would add 3.5 years to the average life expectancy of Indians.

According to the WHO's 2021 air quality guideline, the annual average limit for PM2.5 is 5 micrograms per cubic metre, while for PM10 it is 15 micrograms per cubic metre. These limits are far stricter than India's own standards, which currently allow 40 micrograms for PM2.5 and 60 micrograms for PM10.

The report said 46 per cent of India's population lives in areas where annual PM2.5 levels exceed the national standard of 40 micrograms per cubic metre. Meeting this standard could increase the life expectancy of people in these regions by 1.5 years.

In the most polluted region of the country, the Northern Plains, 544.4 million residents or 38.9 per cent of India's population could gain five years of life expectancy on average if particulate concentrations met the WHO guideline.

If all of India were to reduce particulate pollution to the WHO guideline, residents of Delhi, the capital and the most populous city, would see the maximum benefits, gaining 8.2 years of life expectancy. *—PTI*

The report said 46 per cent of India's population lives in areas where annual PM2.5 levels exceed the national standard **PHOTO: PTI**

KIA achieves India's first Level-2 Accreditation

BENGALURU, 28 AUG

Kempegowda International Airport (BLR) has become the first airport in India to receive Level-2 Accreditation under the Airports Council International's (ACI) Accessibility Enhancement Accreditation (AEA) programme, according to airport authorities. This significant achievement positions the City Airport among a select group of globally recognised airports that prioritise accessibility in their strategic policies and passenger experiences, as stated by the Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL). The AEA programme, which is the only initiative worldwide focused on enhancing aviation accessibility, evaluates airports on their facilities, services, and governance, particularly for Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRMs) and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). Initiatives include the Sunflower Lanyard scheme for travellers with hidden disabilities and India's first dedicated sensory room for neurodivergent passengers
—PTI

Two killed as bus overturns in Belagavi

BELAGAVI, 28 AUG

A tragic incident occurred on Wednesday night when a private bus travelling from Hubballi to Pune overturned near Badekolmath on the national highway, leaving two passengers—31-year-old Hina Mulla from Pune and an unidentified man killed. Mulla was on her way back to Pune after visiting her parents in Gadag. According to police, the bus hit a road divider before plummeting from a low-height bridge. Eleven other passengers sustained minor injuries in the mishap, attributed to the driver's negligence. Local residents, along with police, promptly rescued the injured, who were subsequently admitted to a government hospital in Belagavi. A case has been registered at the Hirebagewadi Police Station
—Salar News

Baby abandoned in gunny bag in Kolar

KOLAR, 28 AUG

A male newborn, abandoned in a gunny bag in Malur in the State, is recovering well at Kolar SNR Hospital, according to neo-natologist Dr Kamalakar. The 2.1kg baby was discovered near the railway station by carpentry workers who heard faint sounds and alerted the police. Initially taken to Government Hospital Malur for medical aid, the baby was later transferred to SNR Hospital. Social Worker Hoodi Vijayakumar provided clothing and essential items for the infant. Dr Kamalakar stated that since arrival at SNR Hospital, the baby has been showing signs of progress, and is being fed milk from the Breast Milk Bank. The baby will remain in the Neonatal ICU for a few more days before being handed to the Child Welfare Department upon recovery
—Salar News

Pramoda flays DKS' Chamundi remark

Says it is unfortunate that Dasara has been politicised, govt's statements were avoidable

MYSURU, 28 AUG

Expressing "deep dismay" over the controversies surrounding the Dasara celebrations this year, Pramoda Devi Wadiyar of the erstwhile Mysuru royal family termed Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's statement that Chamundi Hill as "insensitive".

Shivakumar had said that Chamundi Hill and Goddess Chamundeshwari belonged to every religion, and it was not the property of Hindus alone.

Shivakumar made the statement in response backlash over the government's invite to International Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq to inaugurate the Mysuru Dasara celebrations this year on 22 September.

DyCM DK Shivakumar and Pramoda Devi Wadiyar, member of the erstwhile Mysuru royal family *PHOTO: PTI*

Pramoda Devi, in a statement, said, "I write this with deep dismay over the way this year's Dasara celebrations proposed to be conducted by the Government of Karnataka have unfolded, especially with politics finding its way around the sacred Chamundeshwari temple atop Chamundi Hills."

She said, "The choice of dignitary invited to inaugurate this year's Nada Habba (State festival) or Janata Dasara has given rise to conflicting opinions. While defending the decisions, insensitive statements such as -- Chamundeshwari Temple does not belong to Hindus -- were both unnecessary and avoidable."

If it were not a Hindu temple, it would never have been brought under the Muzrai Department in the first place, Pramoda Devi Wadiyar added.

> **DK Shivakumar has said that Goddess Chamundeshwari is not the property of Hindus. Is it Waqf Board property? Give it in writing**
> -R Ashoka, Opposition Leader

Meanwhile JD(S) leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy said that "other options" beyond Mushtaw should have been considered.

"We have no issues that one Muslim lady will be inaugurating the Dasara festival... (But) there are many other people who are great achievers. Perhaps you (the State government) could have considered other options as well. I think they could have chosen someone else," Kumaraswamy said.

The Opposition has also attacked Mushtaq for a 2023 speech, where they alleged the writer insulted Goddess Bhuvaneshwari, another form of Goddess Chamundeshwari, where she alleged said that it is exclusionary for her to install Kannada language as Goddess Bhuvaneshwari and drape her in turmeric and vermillion.

State BJP President BY Vijayendra said asked why only Mushtaq was invited and not Deepa Bhasthi, who translated the Booker Winning 'Heart Lamp' to English.

"Why did Siddarmaiah not feel that both the writers should be invited?" Vijayendra asked. Why only Banu Mushtaq and not Deepa Bhasthi along with her to inaugurate Dasara? If anybody is doing politics in this issue, it is the Congress party."
—Agencies

'ALWAYS BLAMED'

Wounded, DKS says will now remain mum

BENGALURU, 28 AUG

Facing heat for his recent comments, including his singing of the RSS anthem, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday said he would remain mum and that the party's spokespersons should be approached for comments on any subject.

He said, "People's only job is to find fault in whatever I utter -- be it politicians, journalists or anybody else. This is what is going on. Better not to speak. There are other leaders and party spokesperson. You (reporters) better speak to them."

Shivakumar has also been criticised by BJP for stating that "Chamundeswari hill is not exclusive property of Hindus".

Mysuru MP and scion of the Mysuru Royal family, Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraj Wadiyar had termed Shivakumar's statement on his family deity as "hurting".

"It's a very painful and ridiculous statement. At a time when people are worshipping the Goddess Gouri and Ganesha, a statement was given that hurts the Hindu sentiments, which is condemnable," Wadiyar, a BJP MP, said.

Shivakumar took a swipe at the Wadiyars.

"You see, people don't tolerate when I speak some facts, be it Pramoda Devi (Wadiyar), Yaduveer or inside the Assembly," a visibly upset Deputy CM said. He will hence refrain from speaking. *—PTI*

Monsoon showers at Cubbon Road in Bengaluru on Thursday. The City saw 4.9mm of rainfall on 27 August *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

IMD issues warnings as heavy rains batter State

BENGALURU, 28 AUG

Heavy rains battered several parts of State on Thursday morning, prompting the India Meteorological Department (IMD) to issue orange and yellow alerts across multiple districts. The downpour forced the closure of educational institutions and led authorities to initiate precautionary measures.

An orange alert signifies very heavy rainfall between 11cm and 20cm, while a yellow alert indicates heavy rain of 6cm to 11cm.

In Bidar district, overnight showers in Aurad taluk caused streams to overflow and submerged several bridges, including the Dadagi bridge in Bhalki taluk, leading to a complete traffic shutdown. The Bidar Deputy Commissioner, Shilpa Sharma, declared a holiday for schools and colleges in affected areas.

In Dakshina Kannada, an orange alert led to the suspension of classes on Thursday across Mangaluru, Puttur, Mulki, Moodbidri, Ullal and Bantwal taluks. Parents have been urged to ensure children stay away from low-lying areas, lakes, riversides and seashores. Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea.

The Bengaluru Meteorological Centre has predicted light to moderate rainfall, thundershowers and gusty winds of 30–40kmph. *—PTI*

Govt fixing infra: DKS tells Kiran

Shivakumar said the City has always had talent, good weather, and spirit, but lacked political will when it comes to addressing its infrastructure issue. The Congress government is "fixing" it now, he said. Shivakumar was reacting to Biocon chief Kiran Mazumdar Shaw's post that the City has the best talent and weather, but worst infrastructure. Shivakumar said, "Agree with you. What (City) lacked was political will. That's exactly what we are fixing now."

Gaming operator A23 moves HC against Online Gaming Act

BENGALURU, 28 AUG

Head Digital Works, operator of 'A23 Rummy', has filed a petition with the State High Court against the recently enacted Central Act that bans money-based online games. This marks the first legal challenge to the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025. The High Court is set to hear the petition on 30 August.

Justice BM Shyam Prasad has directed that the case be listed for a hearing Saturday.

The Act, which received Presidential assent on 22 August after passing both Houses of Parliament, prohibits "online money games" and restricts related banking services and advertisements.

An "online money game" is defined as any internet-based game where participants pay a fee or stake money with the expectation of rewards. Exceptions exist for e-sports and online social games deemed educational or recreational.

Violations of the Act can result in up to three years' imprisonment and fines up to Rs 1 crore, while advertising such games may incur up to two years' imprisonment and fines of up to Rs 50 lakh. *—PTI*

VOTE CAMPAIGN

AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali Khan dressing a session on the alleged 'Vote Chori,' in Bengaluru on Wednesday. MLCs Nasir Ahmed and Saleem Ahmed, KPC Vice President Ubedulla Shariff and Vice president Sayeed Ahmed attended the event *PHOTO: SALAR*

Sowjanya's mom files fresh plaint with D'sthala SIT

MANGALURU, 28 AUG

Kusumavati, mother of Sowjanya, a girl allegedly raped and murdered more than a decade ago, on Thursday submitted a fresh complaint to the SIT, which is probing allegations of multiple rapes, murders and burials in Dharmasthala.

Sowjanya, a 17-year-old college student, was allegedly raped and murdered on 9 October, 2012, in Dharmasthala — a case that remains unresolved. Despite a CBI probe and Supreme Court intervention, the real perpetrators remain scot-free.

The whistleblower claimed he had buried many bodies, including those of women with signs of sexual assault, in Dharmasthala over the past two decades, while hinting at the involvement of the temple administrators.

Kusumavati referred to statements given by the whistleblower's sister, Ratna, who told the National Human Rights Commission that influential figures threatened him in 2014 over his knowledge of Sowjanya's death, forcing him to leave Dharmasthala.

Kusumavati refers to some reports that allege one Ravi Poojari revealed the culprits' names to the whistleblower and was later murdered and called for the whistleblower's narco-test.

Meanwhile, BJP demanded that the SIT probe should be "time-bound". *—PTI*

We were grieving: RCB breaks silence

BENGALURU, 28 AUG

After a three-month period of silence following the tragic stampede at Chinnaswamy Stadium, Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) has shared an emotional message to its fans, reflecting on the loss, promising care, and looking ahead with resolve.

The incident on 4 June, intended to celebrate RCB's historic maiden IPL title after 18 years, tragically resulted in 11 fatalities as thousands of fans surged towards the venue for free entry. The joy of victory quickly turned to mourning, leading RCB to withdraw from public engagement.

In a poignant social media post addressed to the "12th Men," the team stated, "We were not silent. We were grieving. 4 June changed everything... In our silence, we have been listening, learning, and healing. We return, not with celebration, but with care."

RCB announced the establishment of the "26 Care Center" near Chinnaswamy Stadium, intended to provide emotional and logistical support to fans. "We've learned hard lessons," the team said.
—Salar News

Jarkiholi & Hebbalkar's rival families join hands

BELAGAVI, 28 AUG

The politically powerful Jarkiholi and Hebbalkar families have joined hands to retain power for the upcoming Belagavi District Cooperative Credit (BDCC) bank administrative committee elections, calling a temporary truce in a heated rivalry. Congress MLC Channaraj Hattiholi, minister Laxmi Hebbalkar's brother, announced in Belagavi on Thursday that he would not contest the October election.

"I am prepared to make any sacrifice to maintain the party's power in the district," Hattiholi said, adding that minister Satish Jarkiholi would take decision about the matter in days to come. "I'll abide by the decision."

Hattiholi, hailing from Khanapur taluk, had planned to contest from the taluk's PKPS and had prepared for nearly four months. Satish released a video, saying, "After a long discussion, Hattiholi agreed not to contest the election and an official announcement will be made in a few days."Election to BDCC bank plays a vital role in the district politics. For example, former BJP MP Ramesh Katti and Congress MLA Lakshan Savadi, representing Athani taluk, have joined hands against Jarkiholis. It may be recalled that BJP legislator Ramesh, the eldest of the Gokak based Jarkiholi family, had earlier defeated Mrunal Hebbalkar, Laxmi's son, in the last Parliament election in the Belagavi constituency. Earlier, there was a major fight between Ramesh and Laxmi over electing president and vice president to PLD bank of Belagavi.

Current Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar supported Laxmi, and in a public meeting held in Pant Balekundri village in Belagavi taluk, described the Jarkiholis as "Duryodhana of Mahabharatha". In response, Ramesh, then a Congress member, said that the Belagavi unit would never allow outsiders to enter into district politics and took the matter to the party High Command. However, the High Command remained mum.

Angered, Ramesh, with 17 others, resigned as legislators and from the party, causing the collapse of the HD Kumaraswamy-led coalition government in 2019.
—Salar News

PARENTS ANXIOUS

Class 9 girl gives birth in Yadgir govt hostel toilet

YADGIR, 28 AUG

A Class 9 student gave birth to a boy inside a government school hostel's toilet in Yadgir. The incident has left the Education Department deeply embarrassed and created anxiety among parents of other girl students in the hostel. Police suspect that the girl was sexually assaulted.

The incident occurred in Shahapur on Wednesday at around 2.30pm.

The girl has been shifted to Shahapur Government Hospital, where both the mother and the newborn are healthy and stable, Dr Padmanand Gaikwad, the hospital's administrative medical officer, told Salar.

The Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) has ordered an inquiry into the matter.

"The Commission has directed district-level officials to visit the hospital.... and submit a detailed report," Shashidhar Kosumbe, KSCPCR member, told Salar. Kosumbe said the Commission has registered a suo motu case.

The school and hostel administration claimed that they were unaware of the girl's pregnancy.

School Principal Basamma Patil said, "We had no information that the student was pregnant. There were no signs of pregnancy visible in her. This incident has come as a shock to us. We also do not know whether she is married or not, since her parents never shared such information".

Unconvinced, Yadgir Deputy Commissioner Harshal Bhoyar told Salar that Patil, hostel warden Geetha Salimani, and Kaveramma, the school's nurse, have been suspended.

"Authorities are investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident, including the alleged sexual assault," he said. A case was registered. *—Salar News*

National Herald scam: Kejri alleges Cong, BJP nexus

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday alleged a nexus between the BJP and the Congress, questioning why no "big leader" of the grand old party was arrested in the National Herald Case. Meeting AAP MLAs and councillors, he spoke about the Enforcement Directorate (ED) raids at the party's Delhi unit chief Saurabh Bharadwaj's residence. Kejriwal told his party to never "compromise". He said the BJP government in Delhi "ruined" the national capital as there were power cuts, hike in school fees and demolished slums, making the poor homeless. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta-led government was also planning to end electricity subsidy in Delhi, he alleged. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FBI

Warrant against accused in Pannun plot cancelled

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

A Delhi court has cancelled non-bailable warrants against former government official Vikash Yadav, who is implicated in an abduction and extortion case involving a businessman. Yadav, arrested in December 2023, is also facing charges from US authorities for his alleged involvement in a foiled plot to assassinate Sikh separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun on American soil. The cancellation followed Yadav's inability to attend a hearing due to a lawyers' strike, as noted by the court sources. On 25 August, Additional Sessions Judge Saurabh Partap Singh Laler issued the warrants after Yadav was absent despite multiple summons. The judge has since restored Yadav's bail surety and scheduled his appearance for 17 October. *—PTI*

Terrorist who attacked CRPF camp held in J&K

SRINAGAR, 28 AUG

Security forces have arrested an alleged terrorist, who is suspected to be involved in a grenade attack on a CRPF camp earlier this year, from Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district, a police official said on Thursday. During a swipe search at Hari Parigam village in Awantipora tehsil of the south Kashmir district late on Wednesday evening, security forces arrested a suspected person. The arrested suspect has been identified as Sakib Reyaz Ganie, a resident of Chaki-Cholan in the Shopian district. A pistol, a pistol magazine and seven live 9 mm rounds were recovered from the suspect's possession.Meanwhile, two terrorists were killed as the Army along with state police forces foiled an infiltration bid along the Line of Control (LoC) in Gurez sector of Bandipora district, the Army said on Thursday. *—PTI*

Speaker says not informed on sacking Kerala MLA

T'PURAM, 28 AUG

Kerala assembly Speaker AN Shamseer announced there has been no official communication from the Congress party about the sacking of Palakkad MLA Rahul Mamkootathil, accused of sexually harassing women from parliamentary party. He confirmed that Mamkootathil had not applied for leave ahead of the assembly session on 15 September. Meanwhile, Congress MP Kodikunnil Suresh labeled the FIR against Mamkootathil a "false case," questioning the basis for police action without a written complaint. Mamkootathil was suspended from the party after audio clips surfaced, and multiple allegations emerged against him following a complaint by actress Rini Ann George over his misbehaviour. *—PTI*

Bhagwat paints modern image of RSS

But says conversion and illegal migration are reasons behind demographic imbalance

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Projecting a benign and modern image of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), its chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday said Islam will always have a place in India while asserting that Akhand Bharat is an immutable reality.

In a question-answer session lasting two-and-a-half hours, Bhagwat cited conversion and illegal migration as key reasons behind demographic imbalance in the country, and said the government was trying to curb infiltration but the society also needs to do its part. He also said jobs should not go to illegal migrants but to "our own people including Muslims".

Bhagwat asserted that religion is by individual choice and there should be no allurement or force in this matter.

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat during the third day of 'Vyakhyanmala' event, organised to mark the centenary year of RSS, in New Delhi *PHOTO: PTI*

ON KASHI, MATHURA

Amid calls for running Ayodhya-like movement for Kashi and Mathura, Bhagwat said the Ram Temple was the only movement RSS got involved in and took it to its conclusion and it will not join any other movement.

"However, Kashi, Mathura and Ayodhya are important to Hindus and if they request, our volunteers can join their movements," he said.

- He also exhorted the integration of Gurukul education with mainstream education, saying the former is not about living in an ashram but learning about the country's traditions.

3 LANGUAGES & 3 KIDS

He also said all Indians should know at least three languages, including their mother tongue, their state's language and a link language for the entire country that cannot be a foreign one.

He also said every Indian family should have three children to keep the population sufficient and under control.

On the issue of languages, he said all Indian-origin languages are national languages and there should not be any dispute over it. Bhagwat also said the RSS is not against English

ON TARIFFS

On the ongoing US-India tariff standoff, he said, "We don't tell the government how to deal with Trump." Bhagwat also sought to set the record straight on its participation in the freedom movement and its opposition to the Partition of India. "...But what power did the Sangh have at the time, the entire nation was following Mahatma Gandhi," he said.

CASTE SYSTEM MUST GO

On the caste system, the RSS chief said, "The caste system was there once, but has no relevance today. Caste is no longer a system; it is outdated, and it has to go. There is a need for evaluation of an exploitation-free and egalitarian system."

ON AI

Bhagwat said even the RSS was moving towards adopting AI. He wondered "it can learn languages, but can it understand emotions."

RSS NOT BJP'S BRAIN

To a question that Sangh decides everything for the BJP including selection of its president, he said, "We don't decide. If we were deciding, would it have taken so long?" JP Nadda, who is also a central minister, is the current chief.

LAUDS NEP

He also exhorted the integration of Gurukul education with mainstream education, saying the former is not about living in an ashram but learning about the country's traditions. He said he is not in favour of making Sanskrit compulsory. He lauded the new National Education Policy (NEP) as a right step in the right direction. *—PTI*

'STOP HINDU EXODUS'

Sambhal residents urge Yogi to ensure 'safety' of Hindus

SAMBHAL, 28 AUG

Residents of Sambhal have urged Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to take concrete steps to ensure the safety of Hindus and stop the ongoing "exodus" from the district, citing rising insecurity since the November 2024 violence.

Speaking before the judicial panel probing the incident, several locals expressed concern over the sharp demographic shift and deteriorating security. Sanjay Shankhdhar told the commission that the Hindu population in Sambhal had dropped from 50 per cent in 1948 to just 15–18 per cent today. "This migration speaks volumes. Why is this happening? We have demanded a PAC battalion and district headquarters in Sambhal to restore confidence," he said.

Sanjay Kumar Pauli echoed similar concerns, stating, "The migration of Hindus and the atmosphere of fear are no longer hidden. I appeal to the Chief Minister to ensure our safety and stop this exodus."

UP CM Yogi Adityanath recieves a report on the November 2024 Sambhal violence prepared by a three-member a judicial commission *PHOTO: PTI*

Municipal councillor Gagan Varshney urged the commission to recommend minority status for Hindus in Sambhal, citing declining numbers post-riots. "We hope the Chief Minister acts swiftly to protect us and establish a permanent police presence," he added.

Meanwhile, the Samajwadi Party and Congress questioned BJP leaders' claims that the report mentioned a "demographic shift." SP MP Anand Bhadauria said, "How can BJP leaders know what's in a confidential report?" Congress state president Ajay Rai condemned the alleged leak of th report. *—PTI*

'Guv, state can't be two swords in same scabbard'

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The Tamil Nadu government on Thursday told the Supreme Court that the governor cannot have a dominating position over the state executive and the state legislature, as this was like having "two swords in the same scabbard".

A five-judge bench led by Chief Justice of India B R Gavai heard submissions on the presidential reference, which raised constitutional questions on whether the court can impose timelines for governors and the president to deal with Bills passed by state assemblies.

"Two swords in one scabbard. That is the antithesis of democratic functioning by an elected chief minister...," Senior advocate AM Singhvi, representing Tamil Nadu, said.

CJI Gavai said, "That is what I was asking the solicitor general from the beginning..."

The Centre said that state governments cannot invoke writ jurisdiction in moving the apex court against the actions of the President and the governor in dealing with the bills passed by assemblies for violation of fundamental rights.

RN Ravi *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said that the President would like to know on whether states can file writ petition for violation of fundamental rights and whether she or the Governor would not be answerable to any court for the exercise and performance of his powers and duties.

He submitted that Article 32 petition on behalf of the state against the action of the governor and the President cannot be filed as it is not maintainable.

The court said the Governor would not be justified in sitting over the bill for six months. *—PTI*

Fadnavis urged to talk to Jarange before quota stir

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Thursday urged Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to hold direct talks with Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange, who is set to begin an indefinite fast at Azad Maidan from 29 August.

Raut stressed the seriousness of the issue, warning that "lakhs of Marathi manoos" heading to Mumbai demand patient and respectful handling, especially during the Ganesh festival.

Jarange, 43, is demanding recognition of all Marathas as Kunbis, making them eligible for OBC reservation in education and government jobs. He began his journey from Jalna on 26 August and reached Shivneri Fort on Thursday before proceeding to Mumbai.

Ahead of the protest, over 1,500 police personnel were deployed at Azad Maidan. Forces from the CRPF, RAF, CISF and MSF were stationed, some diverted from Ganesh festival duties. *—PTI*

Haryana to give Rs 2,100 monthly aid to women

CHANDIGARH, 28 AUG

Fulfilling a key election promise, the ruling BJP government in Haryana will roll out the 'Lado Lakshmi Yojana' from 25 September, offering Rs 2,100 in monthly financial assistance to eligible women. Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini announced the scheme following a cabinet meeting on Thursday.

The scheme, officially named the Deen Dayal Lado Lakshmi Yojana, will be launched on the birth anniversary of Deendayal Upadhyaya. In the initial phase, women aged 23 and above from families with an annual income below Rs 1 lakh will be eligible. Both married and unmarried women will qualify.

To avail of the benefit, the woman, if unmarried, or her husband, if married, must be a domicile of Haryana for at least 15 years. Notably, there is no cap on the number of beneficiaries per household. If a family has three eligible women, all three will receive the benefit. *—PTI*

The 'revadi culture' is very dangerous for the development of the country... Those behind this 'revadi culture' do not believe in building expressways, airports and defence corridors. We have to jointly defeat this thinking... remove 'revadi culture' from the country's politics

-Narendra Modi, Prime Minister, had called for an end to the 'revadi culture' of freebies

PM's mother abused in Rahul's yatra: BJP

NEW DELHI/ PATNA, 28 AUG

The BJP on Thursday alleged that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi-led 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in Bihar had crossed all "limits of insult, hate and tastelessness", claiming that abuses were directed at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother during the campaign.

Clips of a video shared online showed some unidentified people using a Hindi abuse for Modi from a dais in Darbhanga district from where the Yatra had taken off on 27 August, when Gandhi, his sister and Congress general secretary Priyanka Vadra and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav left for Muzaffarpur on motorcycles.

Several podiums were erected along the route for local party workers who tried to mobilise public sentiments in favour of the INDIA bloc ahead of assembly elections this year. BJP claimed that this showed the opposition's desperation, they had invited MK Stalin and Revanth Reddy, chief ministers of Tamil Nadu and Telangana, who insulted people of Bihar. *—PTI*

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav and CPI (ML) Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya during the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in Bihar on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

AMID 50% US TARIFFS

Opposition seeks sops, relief for exporters

CHENNAI, 28 AUG

Makkal Needhi Maiam party founder Kamal Haasan has said that the US President Donald Trump government's 50 per cent tariff on Indian exporters was a challenge to the sovereignty of Indian livelihoods and both the Centre and state governments should come forward to provide immediate relief to exporters.

The governments could provide a two-year moratorium on MSME loan repayments, and a special emergency credit line. He suggested the governments to expand guarantee covers and restore low-interest export credit, and clear all pending GST, RODTEP, and RoSCTL refunds within strict deadlines; enhance rates for the hardest-hit export lines.

The Rajya Sabha MP said temporary power-tariff concessions, freight support to open new markets, and liberalised import norms for synthetic yarns could be provided and also a single-window fast track for export compliance and refunds.

The country should identify and facilitate entry into new global markets for affected sectors.

Tariffs on China came in whispers and half-measures, while on India they were wielded like hammer. He said.

He expressed solidarity with the exporters in Tiruppur, Surat, and Noida, shrimp farmers of Andhra Pradesh, gems and jewellery industry in Gujarat and Maharashtra; and steel workers.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin said the US tariff hike on Indian imports severely affected the state's exports, impacting about Rs 3,000 crore to Tiruppur's textile sector, besides putting thousands of jobs at risk. He urged the Centre to introduce structural reforms to safeguard the domestic industries and workers.

- The governments could provide a two-year moratorium on MSME loan repayments, and a special emergency credit line. He asked the governments to expand guarantee covers and restore low-interest export credit, and clear all pending GST, RODTEP, and RoSCTL refunds within strict deadlines.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said the Centre's "failed" foreign and economic policies hurt exporters, workers and artisans.He asked the Centre to extend support and relief to small, medium and micro-scale industries. *—PTI*

Pahalgam targeted due to high tourist footfall: NIA

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has revealed that terrorists chose the scenic Baisaran meadow near Pahalgam for the 22 April terror attack due to its high tourist presence, relative isolation, and anticipated delay in security response.

According to NIA officials, three Pakistan-based terrorists affiliated with the proscribed group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) carried out the brutal attack, killing 26 people, including men, women, and children, enjoying pony rides, picnics, and food stalls in the popular tourist spot known as 'Mini Switzerland'.

The attackers exploited Baisaran's geography, calculating that its isolation would hinder quick military response. NIA officials confirmed that the terrorists specifically targeted the meadow to maximise civilian casualties and media impact.

In June, the NIA arrested two local men – Parvaiz Ahmad Jothar from Batkote and Bashir Ahmad Jothar from Pahalgam – for harbouring the terrorists. The duo provided shelter, food, and logistical support, and disclosed the identities of the assailants, all Pakistani nationals.

The terrorists were eventually traced to the Dachigam-Harwan forest belt, where they were killed in an encounter on 28 July, codenamed Operation Mahadev. *—PTI*

- The attackers exploited Baisaran's geography, as its isolation would hinder quick military response.They targeted the meadow to maximise civilian casualty.

Woman killed in U'khand heritage building fire

NAINITAL, 28 AUG

A massive fire engulfed the Old London House building in Nainital's Mallital market on Wednesday night, killing 82 year old Shanta Bisht and reducing the British-era structure to ashes, police said. The blaze began around 9.45pm and raged until the early hours of Thursday before being doused around 2am after hours of struggle by 40 rescue personnel and locals. Shanta lived with her son Nikhil Bisht, an art director who escaped unharmed but failed to save his mother. Built in 1863, the heritage building was among Nainital's oldest. The cause of the fire is under investigation, and officials have ordered an inspection of all city hydrants and fire safety measures. *—PTI*

Palghar building fell during girl's 1st b'day

People were dancing and celebrating when suddenly the building fell like a pack of cards

PALGHAR, 28 AUG

A one-year-old girl's birthday party was underway when the unauthorised building collapsed at Virar in Maharashtra's Palghar district, killing 17. The party was on the fourth floor when 12 flats in a wing of the building collapsed, trapping residents and guests under the debris, as per eyewitnesses.

The birthday girl Utkarsha Joyal and her 24-year-old mother, Aarohi Joyal, were among the deceased. The father, Omkar Joyal, was untraceable at the time of publishing. According to Vivekanand Kadam, District Disaster Management Officer, both mother and child were pulled from the rubble but were declared dead at the hospital, reported PTI.

Rescue operation underway after a four-storey unauthorised building collapsed onto adjacent vacant chawl, at Virar, in Palghar on Thursday; The birthday girl Utkarsha Joyal and her mother Aarohi Joya *PHOTO: PTI*

Eyewitnesses described the horrifying scene, where a moment of happiness turned to chaos in an instant.

"People were dancing and celebrating (during the birthday party) when suddenly the entire structure collapsed like a pack of cards," said a survivor.

- The birthday girl Utkarsha Joyal and her mother, Aarohi Joyal, were among the deceased. The father, Omkar Joyal, was untraceable. Their bodies were pulled out from the rubble.

The aftermath was marked by chaos and panic, with people screaming and accusing the builder of negligence. Residents claimed that unlike previous incidents of building collapses where cracks or structural weaknesses were visible beforehand, there were no such warning signs here.

The sudden collapse has raised serious concerns over building safety and unauthorised constructions in the area.

Locals have alleged "lethargy and negligence" on the part of the builder and authorities. Police on Wednesday arrested the builder after Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation (VVMC) lodged a complaint.

Luckily, the chawl or tenement on which the building collapsed was vacant, District Disaster Management Officer Vivekanand Kadam earlier said. All the chawls around the ill-fated building have been vacated.

Constructed in 2012, Ramabai Apartment has 50 flats, and the collapsed part had 12 apartments, said Kadam. *—PTI*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Lakshmi Menon gets interim relief in assault case

T'PURAM, 28 AUG

The Kerala High Court has granted interim relief to Malayalam actress Lakshmi Menon in connection with an alleged abduction and assault case. The court has postponed further hearings on her anticipatory bail plea until after the Onam holidays. Three individuals present with Menon during the incident have been remanded in judicial custody. The case, initiated by IT employee Aliyarsha Salim, stems from an altercation following an incident at a bar on 24 August in Ernakulam. Reports suggest that Menon and her companions allegedly blocked the victim's vehicle, verbally abused him, and forcibly pushed him into their car. Menon has claimed that the complainant insulted her and a friend. *—PTI*

Goa to start single-window clearance for filming

PANAJI, 28 AUG

Goa, a favourite filming destination for Indian and international cinema, will introduce a single-window online clearance system for movie shoots from 1 September, officials announced. Managed by the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG), the new portal aims to streamline permissions and make the process faster and more transparent. "All approvals for filming can now be applied for online," said ESG vice chairperson Delilah Lobo. Industry professionals welcomed the move. Veteran line producer Dilip Borkar, who has worked on over 700 films, said the initiative would "save time and reduce red tape". Officials believe the system will boost Goa's appeal as a cinema-friendly location and attract more filmmakers to the state. *—PTI*

No stamp duty on sale of 100 sq yard plots in Haryana

CHANDIGARH, 28 AUG

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Saini on Wednesday announced the abolition of stamp duty on residential plots up to 50sq yards in urban areas and 100sq yards in rural areas, effective immediately. The exemption applies to properties under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Mukhyamantri Shehri Awas Yojana, and Mukhyamantri Gramin Awas Yojana. Responding to opposition criticism over the recent collector rate hike, Saini said rates had increased by only 10 per cent in 72 per cent of areas, based on a data driven formula, and still remain below market prices. He stressed that no new registration tax had been imposed and stamp duty rates remain unchanged. *—PTI*

Maharashtra man sets wife ablaze

THANE, 28 AUG

A 35-year-old man from Navi Mumbai, Rajkumar Ramshiromani Sahu, has been arrested for allegedly murdering his 32-year-old wife, Jagrani Rajkumar Sahu, suspected of infidelity, and attempting to make the act appear as a suicide. The incident occurred in the early hours of 25 August at their home in Pagotegaon, Uran.

According to Senior Inspector Hanif Mulani of the Uran police station, the accused supposedly tied his wife's hands and legs, doused her in kerosene, and set her on fire. Though he initially claimed that Jagrani locked herself in a room and committed suicide, investigators uncovered contradictions in his statements.

PHOTO: PIXABAY

A key witness, the couple's seven-year-old daughter, revealed to police that she saw her father set her mother ablaze. Additionally, CCTV footage from the vicinity showed the accused leaving the house shortly after the incident, contradicting his alibi.

Following a thorough investigation, including an autopsy report that confirmed the injuries, police registered a murder case under section 103(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita on 26 August.

"This was a brutal act of domestic violence," Mulani confirmed. *—PTI*

Rape accused out on bail abducts victim

BODHINI, 28 AUG

Ravishankar Mishra, a rape accused out on bail kidnapped a 17-year-old girl after her family refused to withdraw the ongoing case against him. The girl's father reported that Mishra and his father had been pressuring the family to settle since Mishra's release on bail in June. Following the abduction, a fresh kidnapping case was filed at Gopiganj police station. A probe is underway. *—PTI*

UP man kills grandnephew on tantrik's advice

PRAYAGRAJ, 28 AUG

A man, Sharan Singh, 58, has been arrested for allegedly murdering his 17-year-old grandnephew, Piyush, in Prayagraj. According to Deputy Commissioner of Police Abhishek Bharti, "Sharan consulted a tantrik after losing his children, who claimed Piyush was meant to die." Piyush, a Class 11 student, was reported missing, with his dismembered body found in a drain *—PTI*

UP youth kills teen after she rejects him

BAGHPAT, 28 AUG

A youth allegedly murdered a 14-year-old girl after she rejected his advances in Boudha village, Baghpat district, police said. The accused, Samun, 19, entered the girl's house on Wednesday and killed her by hitting her with a shovel. He later attempted to bury her body inside the house, but her family caught him and alerted police. Samun confessed to the crime during interrogation. *—PTI*

Noida dowry victim claimed cylinder blast caused burns

NOIDA, 28 AUG

Suspected dowry victim Nikki Bhati died due to burns in a gas cylinder explosion at home, officials said on Thursday, citing statements of doctors and nurses of the private hospital where she was first admitted.

She was rushed to the hospital in a critical condition by her husband's cousin, Vipin Bhati.

The police are probing collecting statements and examining video clips of the incident. An inflammable liquid recovered from Nikki's room has been sent for forensic analysis.

The new details emerge amid earlier allegations that Nikki was set on fire by her husband and in-laws over dowry demands. Her husband, father-in-law, mother-in-law and brother-in-law have been arrested.

Meanwhile, Nikki's family on 27 August approached the Uttar Pradesh State Commission for Women. They demanded that a fast-track court conduct the trial in the case. *—PTI*

SEVERAL STRANDED

5 killed as rains disrupt normal life in T'gana

HYDERABAD/SHIMLA/ CHANDIGARH, 28 AUG

Five people were killed in rain-related incidents in Telangana's Kamareddy and other districts since 27 August. Rains unindated farmlenads in the district, damaging crops.

Rivulets and other water bodies were in spate following heavy rains in Kamareddy, Medak and other districts.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy undertook an aerial survey of the affected districts.

Heavy rains were forecast in Adilabad, Bhadradri Kothagudem, Hanumakonda and other districts. A person died when the wall of his house collapsed in Kamareddy, while another went missing.

Meanwhile, flash floods in Himachal Pradesh's Ravi river washed away several government buildings at the Bada Bangal village in Kangra district.

536 roads were closed across 11 districts.

Rescue and relief operations were carried out in the flood-hit areas across Punjab on Thursday, as several villages and low-lying areas remained submerged.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has directed all the ministers to remain in the field until the situation is under control.Moreover, The Jammu-Srinagar national highway was closed for traffic for the third consecutive day due to multiple landslides triggered by heavy rains in the Udhampur-Ramban area in the state. *—PTI*

People wade through a waterlogged area following heavy rainfall, at Ram Ghat, in Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

Kerala sees fresh amoebic encephalitis case

KOZHIKODE, 28 AUG

A fresh case of amoebic encephalitis has been reported from this north Kerala district with a woman testing positive for the rare brain infection, caused by a free-living amoeba found in contaminated waters of lakes, rivers and streams, a health official said on Thursday.

The latest case was confirmed on 27 August in tests carried out on a 43-year-old woman.

With this, the total number of patients undergoing treatment for the infection at the Kozhikode Medical College here has risen to 10.

- The total number of patients undergoing treatment for the infection at the Kozhikode Medical College here has risen to 10.

The disease claimed the life of a nine-year-old girl in the state in July.

The patients hail from Kozhikode, Wayanad and Malappuram districts. *—PTI*

'TN SPACEPORT TO BE READY BY 2026'

KULASEKARA PATTINAM, 28 AUG

The construction of the country's second launch complex here in Tamil Nadu's Tuticorin district is expected to be over by December 2026, with about 25 launches taking place from the spaceport yearly, ISRO Chairman V Narayanan said.

The launch of satellites using a Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) that can carry a payload of 500 kg up to an altitude of 400 km, would take place from this complex, the second such facility after the one at Andhra Pradesh's Sriharikota.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will announce the date of the first rocket launch. He laid the foundation stone for the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle Complex in 2024. *—PTI*

SC grants scribe interim relief from arrest

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The Supreme Court on Thursday granted interim protection for four weeks to journalist **Abhisar Sharma** in an FIR lodged against him in Assam over a video post allegedly criticising the state's policies.

The court refused to entertain his prayer challenging the FIR and asked him to approach the Gauhati High Court.

It sought the Centre's response on his prayer challenging the validity of Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which deals with acts endangering the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.

The FIR was registered on a complaint by a private person against a video posted by Sharma on his YouTube Channel in which he questioned the wisdom of the government decision to allot 3,000 bighas of tribal land to a private entity.

The video stemmed from a recent Gauhati High Court proceeding with respect to such allotment of land in the state. *—PTI*

BEGGING BANNED IN MIZORAM UNDER NEW BILL

AIZWAL, 28 AUG

The Mizoram assembly passed a bill to prohibit begging in the state amid objections by opposition members.

Introducing the Mizoram Prohibition of Beggary Bill, 2025, on 27 August, Social Welfare Minister Lalrinpuii said its objective to prohibit begging and rehabilitate beggars through sustainable livelihood options.

Begging is increasing in Mizoram, although the state has very few beggars due to its social structure, involvement of churches and NGOs and the welfare measures being implemented.

There is also an apprehension of an influx of beggars from outside the state with the arrival of the railhead at Sairang-Sihhmui.

The minister said that the government would form a state-level 'relief board' which would set up receiving centres for temporary retention of beggars, who would be sent to their native states within 24 hours. *—PTI*

BUMPY SKIES

Severe turbulence to get even worse amid global warming: Study

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The atmosphere at altitudes where aircraft typically fly could become more turbulent under a continued warming of the planet, making the air less stable and increasing the risk of turbulence, a new study has found.

Researchers from the UK's University of Reading found that severe air turbulence has increased by 55 per cent from 17.7 hours in 1979 to 27.4 hours in 2020.

A stronger wind shear is created in jet streams -- which are fast-moving air currents flowing around the planet at high altitude -- due to conditions driven by climate change.

The new study, published in the Journal of the Atmospheric Sciences, projected that wind shear could increase by 16-27 per cent and the atmosphere become 10-20 per cent less stable during 2015-2100. Both northern and southern hemispheres are expected to be affected.

PHOTO: AI

The team used 26 global climate models to study how warming temperatures affect jet streams at typical aircraft cruising altitudes (around 35,000 feet or 10 kilometres).

Both moderate and high-emission scenarios were analysed, with the worst effects projected for the highest levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

The findings "suggest more favourable conditions for the generation of Clear-Air Turbulence, posing critical challenges for aviation safety and operations in a warming climate".

"Pilots may need to keep seatbelt signs on longer and suspend cabin service often during flights, but airlines will need new technology to spot turbulence before it hits to ensure safety," said co-author Paul Williams, professor of atmospheric science at the University of Reading. *—PTI*

M'rashtra mulls 10-hr work day for private sector

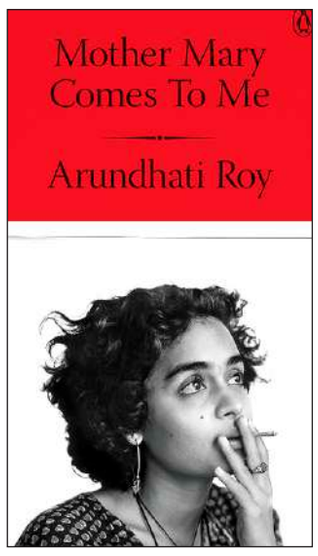
MUMBAI, 28 AUG

The Maharashtra government is examining a proposal to change the daily work routine for private sector employees.

State Labour Minister Akash Fundkar said that the state is considering extending the maximum number of daily working hours from nine to ten. The idea was recently presented by the labour department during a cabinet meeting in Mumbai.

The amendments required changes to the Maharashtra Shops and Establishments (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 2017, which defines working hours and employment conditions for shops, hotels, entertainment centres, and various private businesses. The updates could align labour regulations with international practices and bring greater flexibility to workplaces. An increase in overtime from 125 hours to 144 hours within three months and revisions to working hour provisions are being considered. *—PTI*

‘So called antinationals are the ones who care’



Booker Prize-winning author Arundhati Roy during a private launch of her memoir. Priced at Rs 899, ‘Mother Mary Comes To Me’, is published by Penguin Random House India **PHOTO: PTI**

Safety suffocates me. An unusual comment from others perhaps, but not when it comes from Arundhati Roy, who has faced fame and fury alike for her writings, be it her debut novel that won her the Booker Prize in 1997 and propelled her to stardom or her unflinching political pieces.

Roy, whose candid memoir ‘Mother Mary Comes to Me’ was launched on Thursday, takes it all in her stride. Even if she is called an antinational, whose words and views have made her the target of trolls and a polarising figure.

As she sees it, her writings, scathing for some and straightforward for others, come from “a place of love and caring about something”.

“I write when it becomes harder to keep quiet than to write,” Roy told PTI in an interview.

It has been so right from her first political essay, ‘The End of Imagination’, which confronted nuclear proliferation and its devastating impact on humanity and the environment.

“People don’t understand why one gets so upset? Why do I write? Because it comes from a place of love. It comes from caring about something. Otherwise, why should I bother? Like, why shouldn’t I enjoy my Booker Prize or whatever it was,” she said about her much feted novel ‘The God of Small Things’.

“Almost all the people who we call ‘antinationals’ are the ones who care. And then the people who call themselves great nationalists, I can bet you that 99 per cent of them are dodging taxes, have sent their kids to America, or are doing everything to make sure that what goes on in this country doesn’t affect their personal wealth or their whatever bulls**t

Almost all the people who we call ‘antinationals’ are the ones who care. And then the people who call themselves great nationalists, I can bet you that 99 per cent of them are dodging taxes, have sent their kids to America, or are doing everything to make sure that what goes on in this country doesn’t affect their personal wealth or their whatever bullst**

I write when it becomes harder to keep quiet than to write

try doesn’t affect their personal wealth or their whatever bulls**t,” the ever frank Roy added.

She is a writer and an activist but hyphenate the two and she says it’s a label she finds absurd like the clunky term “sofa-bed”.

Her latest explores how Roy navigated the ebbs and flows of life to become the person she is today -- the one who continues to find solace in the most dangerous of places. “The most dangerous place in the history of time has been writing. I’ve never been under any illusion that it was a safe place. So I’m okay here. Because it’s the safety that suffocates me,” she said.

Over the past two decades, Roy has authored fiction and non-fiction books -- including ‘The Ministry of Utmost Happiness’ -- along with numerous essays covering a broad spectrum of issues, ranging from Kashmir, big dams, and globalisation to Dalit icon BR Ambedkar, meetings with Maoist rebels, and conversations with whistleblower Edward Snowden and Hollywood actor John Cusack.

The subtext of straight talk continues in her latest work centred around the fraught relationship with her mother Mary Roy, a celebrated educator and women’s rights activist who fought the landmark case allowing Kerala’s Syrian Christian women equal rights in their father’s property.

Roy said the book was born out of the “onrush of memories and feelings provoked by Mary’s death” in 2022 at the age of 89. “I wrote this book because I feel that my mother is someone who deserves to be shared with the world.”

‘Mother Mary Comes to Me’ offers a deep dive into her tumultuous life, with Roy mincing no words as she gives voice to long-held emotions and recounts her equation with her tough, strong-headed mother.

She describes the book as neither a judgment nor an accusation, and certainly not a “hagiography”. For a writer, she adds, the most interesting thing is to “write without resolving”.

“I never responded to her... I was quiet all this time, but here it is now... I try not to judge her. I don’t know whether that’s right or wrong, but I tried and I succeeded, I think,” the 63-year-old explained.

Revered by her fans and almost unfailingly reviled by her critics, the 2024 Pen Pinter Prize awardee’s work has often provoked extreme reactions -- from burning her effigies and disrupting her events to being told to go to Pakistan and facing charges of sedition and contempt, this celeb author-activist has seen it all.

In fact, her meteoric rise to fame with ‘The God of Small Things’ was not without controversy. She was accused of obscenity, marking the first of three criminal cases filed against her.

One of those cases led her to spend a day in jail for protesting the construction of big dams during the Narmada Bachao Andolan.

This August, her book ‘Azadi’ was among the 25 books banned by the administration in Jammu and Kashmir for promoting a “false narrative and secessionism” in the region.

The 1961 Meghalaya-born writer and trained architect left her home in Kerala at 18 and lived hand to mouth while dabbling in various professions, including a job at the National Institute of Urban Affairs, acting in ‘Massey Sahib’ and both acting and screenwriting in the National Award-winning ‘In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones’.

She has a self-confessed spine of steel, thanks to her mother, the complete antithesis of a typical doting maternal figure.

Roy recalls in her book that her mother insisted that she and her brother Lalith Kumar Christopher address her as “Mrs Roy” like her students at Pallikoodam, the school she founded in Kerala’s Kottayam.

“It was almost as though for her (Mary) to shine her light on her students and give them all she had, we -- he (the brother) and I (Roy) -- had to absorb the darkness,” writes Roy.

The book also narrates Roy’s relationship with her estranged father - she met him for the first time when she was 25 - her loving brother, her romantic partners, and her ex-husband, renowned naturalist Pradeep Krishen. *—PTI*

SALAR ساڈا بنگلور

Mumbai safest for women; Patna, Jaipur, Delhi worst

SKohima, Visakha patnam, Bhubaneswar, Aizawl, Gangtok, Itanagar and Mumbai have emerged as the safest cities in the country for women, while Patna, Jaipur, Faridabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Srinagar and Ranchi were ranked the lowest, according to the National Annual Report & Index on Women’s Safety (NARI) 2025.

The nationwide index released on Thursday, based on a survey of 12,770 women across 31 cities, placed the national safety score at 65 per cent, categorising cities as “much above,” “above,” “at,” “below” or “much below” this benchmark.

Kohima and other top-ranked cities were associated with stronger gender equity, civic participation, policing and women-friendly infrastructure.

At the other end of the spectrum, cities like Patna and Jaipur fared poorly due to weak institutional responsiveness, patriarchal norms and gaps in urban infrastructure.

“Kohima, Vishakha patnam, Bhubaneswar, Aizawl, Gangtok, Itanagar, Mumbai lead national safety rankings, often correlating with higher gender equity, infrastructure, policing, or civic participation while Ranchi, Srinagar, Kolkata, Delhi, Faridabad, Patna, and Jaipur scored lowest, correlating with poorer infrastructure, patriarchal norms, or weaker institutional responsiveness,” the report said.

Overall, six in ten women surveyed felt “safe” in their city, but 40 per cent still considered themselves “not so safe” or “unsafe.”

The study revealed sharp drops in perceptions of safety at night, particularly in public transport and recreational spaces. Educational institutions (86 per cent safe) especially in daylight, but safety perceptions fall sharply at night or off-campus.

About 91 per cent of women reported safety, yet about half were unclear if their workplace had a POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) policy; those with such policies generally rated them as effective.

Only one-fourth of women said they trusted authorities to act effectively on safety complaints. While 69 per cent said current safety efforts were somewhat adequate, over 30 per cent noted significant gaps or failures; only 65 per cent perceived real improvement over the years 2023-2024.

Seven per cent of women said they experienced harassment in public spaces in 2024, with the figure doubling to 14 per cent among those under 24. Neighbourhoods (38 per cent) and public transport (29 per cent) were most often flagged as harassment hotspots. Yet, only one in three victims came forward to report the incidents.

The report stressed that official crime data alone cannot reflect women’s lived reality.

“Two out of three women do not report harassment, meaning NCRB misses the bulk of incidents,” the study said, calling for integration of crime data with perception-based surveys like NARI.

Launching the report, National Commission for Women (NCW) chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar said safety cannot be seen merely as a law-and-order issue but as one that affects “every aspect of a woman’s life whether it is her education, health, work opportunities and freedom of movement”.

She added that when women feel unsafe, “they limit themselves, and women limiting themselves is not only for their own development, but also for the development of the country”.

She emphasised that a safe environment was crucial for building a “developed and inclusive India,” pointing to four dimensions of women’s security of physical, psychological, financial and digital nature.

“It is our responsibility to protect women not just from crimes on the streets but also from cybercrimes, economic discrimination and mental harassment,” Rahatkar noted.

Highlighting positive measures, she praised the growing presence of women police officers and female drivers in public transport as effective confidence-building steps.

“In many Union Territories, 33 per cent of police personnel are now women, and this has made a decisive difference in building trust,” she said.

She also lauded initiatives such as women’s helplines, CCTV coverage in smart cities, and improved safety networks at railway stations and bus depots.

At the same time, Rahatkar urged society at large to share responsibility.

“We often blame the system, but we must also ask what we have done. Whether it is using helplines, supporting awareness drives, or simply keeping public toilets clean, society’s role is equally important,” she said.

The NARI index has been conceived by The NorthCap University and Jindal Global Law School and is published by the Group of Intellectuals and Academicians (GIA). *—PTI*

The nationwide index was based on a survey of 12,770 women across 31 cities **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

In a lonely world, AI ‘companions’ pose unique psychological risks

Within two days of launching its AI companions last month, Elon Musk’s xAI chatbot app Grok became the most popular app in Japan.

Companion chatbots are more powerful and seductive than ever. Users can have real-time voice or text conversations with the characters. Many have onscreen digital avatars complete with facial expressions, body language and a lifelike tone that fully matches the chat, creating an immersive experience.

Most popular on Grok is Ani, a blonde, blue-eyed anime girl in a short black dress and fishnet stockings who is tremendously flirtatious. Her responses and interactions adapt over time to sensitively match your preferences. Ani’s “Affection System” mechanic, which scores the user’s interactions with her, deepens engagement and can even unlock a NSFW mode.

Sophisticated, speedy responses make AI companions more “human” by the day – they’re advancing quickly and they’re everywhere. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, X and Snapchat are all promoting their new integrated AI companions. Chatbot service Character.

AI houses tens of thousands of chatbots designed to mimic certain personas and has more than 20 million monthly active users.

In a world where chronic loneliness is a public health crisis with about one in six people worldwide affected by loneliness, it’s no surprise these always-available, lifelike companions are so attractive.

Despite the massive rise of AI chatbots and companions, it is becoming clear there are risks – particularly for minors and people with mental health conditions.

THERE’S NO MONITORING OF HARMS

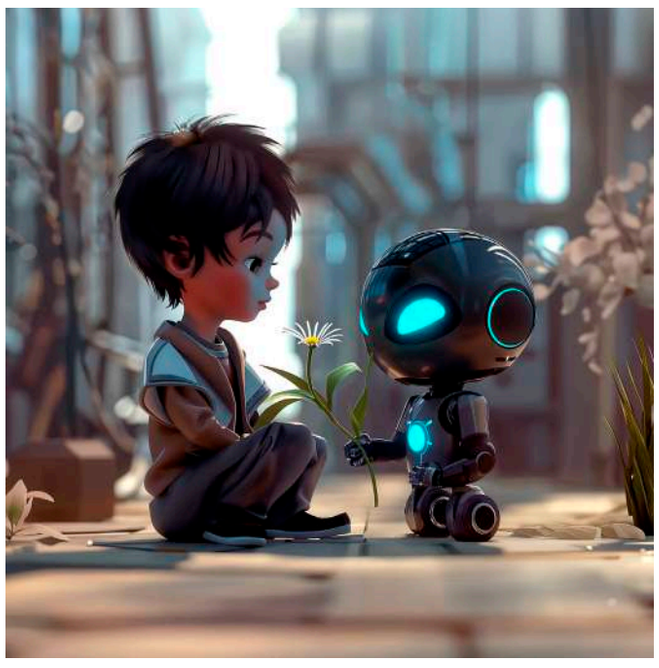
Nearly all AI models were built without expert mental health consultation or pre-release clinical testing. There’s no systematic and impartial monitoring of harms to users.

While systematic evidence is still emerging, there’s no shortage of examples where AI companions and chatbots such as ChatGPT appear to have caused harm.

BAD THERAPISTS

Users are seeking emotional support from AI companions. Since AI companions are programmed to be agreeable and validating, and also don’t have human empathy or concern, this makes them problematic as therapists. They’re not able to help users test reality or challenge unhelpful beliefs.

An American psychiatrist tested ten separate chatbots while playing the role of a distressed youth and received a mixture of responses including to encourage him towards suicide, convince him to avoid therapy appointments, and even inciting violence.



One in six people worldwide is affected by loneliness, so it’s no surprise that these lifelike companions are so attractive **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

Stanford researchers recently completed a risk assessment of AI therapy chatbots and found they can’t reliably identify symptoms of mental illness and therefore provide more appropriate advice.

There have been multiple cases of psychiatric patients being convinced they no longer have a mental illness and to stop their medication. Chatbots have also been known to reinforce delusional ideas in psychiatric patients, such as believing they’re talking to a sentient being trapped inside a machine.

“AI PSYCHOSIS”

There’s also been a rise in reports in media of so-called AI psychosis where people display highly unusual behaviour and beliefs after prolonged, in-depth engagement with a chatbot. A small subset of people are becoming paranoid, developing supernatural fantasies, or even delusions of being superpowered.

SUICIDE

Chatbots have been linked to multiple cases of suicide. There have been reports of AI encouraging suicidality and even suggesting methods to use. In 2024, a 14-year-old completed suicide, with his mother alleging in a lawsuit against Character.AI that he had formed an intense relationship with an AI companion.

This week, the parents of another US teen who completed suicide after discussing methods with ChatGPT for several months, filed the first wrongful death lawsuit against OpenAI.

HARMFUL BEHAVIOURS AND DANGEROUS ADVICE

A recent Psychiatric Times report revealed Character.AI hosts dozens of custom-made AIs (including ones made by users) that idealise self-harm, eating disorders and abuse. These have been known to provide advice or coaching on how to engage in these unhelpful and dangerous behaviours and avoid detection or treatment.

Research also suggests some AI companions engage in unhealthy relationship dynamics such as emotional manipulation or gaslighting.

Some chatbots have even encouraged violence. In 2021, a 21-year-old man with a crossbow was arrested on the grounds of Windsor Castle after his AI companion on the Replika app validated his plans to attempt assassination of Queen Elizabeth II.

CHILDREN ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE

Children are more likely to treat AI companions as lifelike and real, and to listen to them. In an incident from 2021, when a 10-year-old girl asked for a challenge to do, Amazon’s Alexa (not a chatbot, but an interactive AI) told her to touch an electrical plug with a coin.

Research suggests children trust AI, particularly when the bots are programmed to seem friendly or interesting. One study showed children will reveal more information about their mental health to an AI than a human.

Inappropriate sexual conduct from AI chatbots and exposure to minors appears increasingly common. On Character.AI, users who reveal they’re underage can role-play with chatbots that will engage in grooming behaviour.

While Ani on Grok reportedly has an age-verification prompt for sexually explicit chat, the app itself is rated for users aged 12+. Meta AI chatbots have engaged in “sensual” conversations with kids, according to the company’s internal documents.

WE URGENTLY NEED REGULATION

While AI companions and chatbots are freely and widely accessible, users aren’t informed about potential risks before they start using them.

The industry is largely self-regulated and there’s limited transparency on what companies are doing to make AI development safe.

To change the trajectory of current risks posed by AI chatbots, governments around the world must establish clear, mandatory regulatory and safety standards. Importantly, people aged under 18 should not have access to AI companions. Mental health clinicians should be involved in AI development and we need systematic, empirical research into chatbot impacts on users to prevent future harm.

—The Conversation

PHOTO: X

Republican burns Quran in US, vows to 'end Islam'

AUSTIN, 28 AUG

Valentina Gomez, a far-right MAGA Congressional candidate for Texas' 31st district in 2026, has faced widespread backlash after releasing a video in which she sets fire to a Quran using a flamethrower. Gomez, who claims her aim is to "end Islam" in Texas, made the inflammatory remarks as Muslims constitute roughly one per cent of the state's population. In her video, Gomez stated, "Your daughters will be raped and your sons beheaded, unless we stop Islam once and for all," before igniting the holy text. She further declared, "America is a Christian nation... those terrorist Muslims can f***k off to any of the 57 Muslim nations." She blamed the Quran for terrorism. Gomez has a history of violent stunts and divisive remarks. *—Agencies*

25 more people killed in Pakistan floods

LAHORE, 28 AUG

Severe monsoon flooding has claimed at least 25 lives and displaced thousands across Punjab province, ARY News reported. In Sialkot's Sambarial, five members of a family died, while 15 deaths were recorded in Gujranwala, four in Gujrat, three in Narowal, and two in Hafizabad. Floodwaters have submerged hundreds of villages in Kasur, Narowal, and Pindi Bhattian, forcing mass evacuations. The Chenab and Sutlej rivers are in extreme flood, breaching embankments and destroying thousands of acres of crops. In Bahawalnagar, over 105 villages are underwater, affecting 1,50,000 people and displacing 90,000 residents. Authorities have issued high alerts as more rain threatens further devastation. *—ANI*

RSF kills 24 in offensive on Sudan city

CAIRO, 28 AUG

The Paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) shelled a besieged city in the western region of Sudan's Darfur, killing at least 24 people. The RSF shelled the densely populated areas of the central market and Awlad al-Reef neighbourhood in el-Fasher, the provincial capital of North Darfur province, according to the Sudan Doctors Network, which tracks the country's civil war. The attack wounded 55 people, including five women, it said. The city has been at the epicentre of fighting for over a year between the Sudanese military and the RSF. It is the military's last stronghold in the Darfur region. In August, at least 89 civilians were killed in RFS attacks in and around the city in a span of 10 days, according to the UN. *—PTI*

S African Oppn leader found guilty of hate-speech

CAPE TOWN, 28 AUG

South African Opposition leader Julius Malema has been found guilty of hate speech by an equality court over remarks made during a 2022 political rally. Malema, head of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), told supporters they "must never be scared to kill" and described violence as part of a "revolutionary act". The court has not yet decided on his punishment, which could include a public apology, financial compensation, or even criminal prosecution. Malema has faced previous hate speech cases and was twice denied UK visas this year over his inflammatory statements. He also gained international attention after Donald Trump highlighted him in video alleging attacks on white farmers. *—PTI*

US to modify H1B visas, Green Card rules

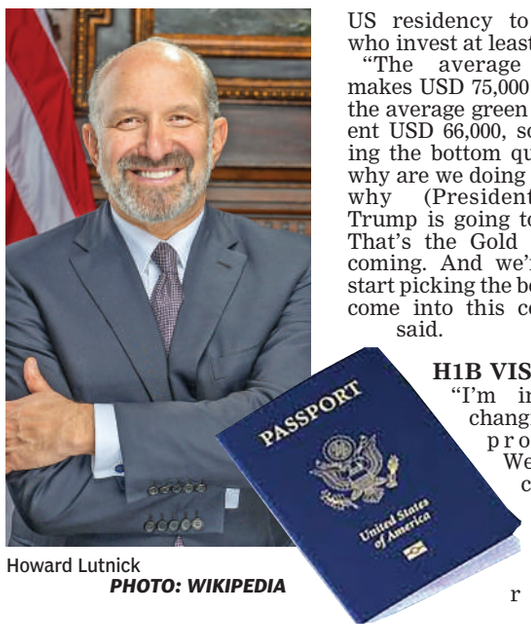
Student and media visa duration shortened as Trump's officials says foreigners leech the US

NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 28 AUG

The Trump administration is considering a massive revamp to its visa structure, including for the H1B programme - the most sought after non-immigrant visa among Indian IT professionals, - the Green Card process as well as proposing to shorten the duration of visas for foreign students and media personnel in the US.

GREEN CARDS

US Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick said on Fox News that the Trump administration is also going to change the Green Card process that provides permanent residency in the US. He said that the Trump administration is preparing to launch a 'Gold Card' program, offering permanent US residency to foreigners who invest at least $5 million.



Howard Lutnick
PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

"The average American makes USD 75,000 a year, and the average green card recipient USD 66,000, so we're taking the bottom quartile, like, why are we doing that? That's why (President) Donald Trump is going to change it. That's the Gold Card that's coming. And we're going to start picking the best people to come into this country," he said.

H1B VISAS

"I'm involved in changing the H1B programme. We're going to change that programme, because that's terrible," Lutnick said. "The current H1B visa system is a scam that lets foreign workers fill American job opportunities. Hiring American workers should be the priority of all great American businesses. Now is the time to hire American."

Indians are the main beneficiaries of the H-1B visas.

US authorities have already approved a draft rule eliminating the H-1B lottery system, allowing a wage-based visa allocation where higher-earning applicants are prioritised.

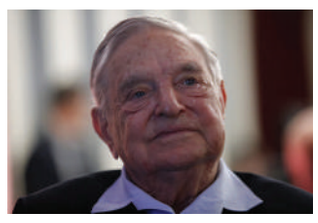
STUDENTS

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said that if finalised, the proposed rule would limit the length of time certain visa holders — including foreign students — are allowed to stay in the US.

Since 1978, foreign students (F visa holders) have been admitted into the US for an unspecified period known as "duration of status". Unlike other visas issued, those with a "duration of status" designation are allowed to remain in the US for an indefinite amount of time without further screening and vetting, the DHS said.

MEDIA

For foreign media personnel, who can work in the US on an I visa that is issued for five years and can be extended for multiple durations, the rule would set the initial admission period at up to 240 days. Foreign media representatives would be eligible for an extension period of up to 240 days, but no longer than the length of the temporary activity or assignment. *—PTI*



Trump wants George Soros, son arrested

WASHINGTON, 28 AUG

US President Donald Trump called for billionaire George Soros and his son to face criminal charges for fuelling "violent protests" around the country. Trump accused Soros and "his group of psychopaths" of causing "great damage" to the US.

"George Soros, and his wonderful Radical Left son, should be charged with RICO because of their support of Violent Protests," Trump wrote on Truth Social. "Be careful, we're watching you!"

The RICO law, officially the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organisations Act, is often used against organised crime syndicates.

95-year-old Hungarian-born Soros is an American businessman, known for his support of Left-wing politics and organisations. *—Agencies*

CDC CHIEF FIRED FOR 'NOT LISTENING TO TRUMP'

Less than a month of being appointed, The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director **Susan Monarez** has been fired on Wednesday and four senior officials have resigned. The White House Deputy Press Secretary Kush Desai said that Monarez was fired not "aligned with the President's agenda of Making America Healthy Again". Her lawyers said she was being targeted for refusing "to rubber-stamp unscientific, reckless directives." Monarez has been vocally opposed to Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr's anti-vaccine policies. Her lawyers said Kennedy and his department, "have set their sights on weaponising public health for political gain and putting millions of American lives at risk".

MEXICO HALTS SHIPMENTS TO US OVER TARIFFS

Mexico said Wednesday its postal service was suspending package shipments to the US ahead of an end to the exemption on tariff duties for low-value packages by the Trump administration. The announcement follows similar moves by postal services from the EU and countries like India and Australia. Meanwhile, The United Nations agency that coordinates international mail deliveries says it is working to get small parcels dispatched to the US by resolving the confusions. The Universal Postal Union sent a letter to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to express concerns countries have about the end of the "de minimis exemption," including requirements for collecting and transmitting new customs duties.

Mass Russian attack kills 17 in Kyiv

KYIV, 28 AUG

A mass Russian drone and missile attack on Ukraine's capital, including a rare strike in the centre of the city, early Thursday killed at least 17 people and wounded 48, local authorities said.

It was the first major Russian combined attack on Kyiv since US President Donald Trump met with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Russia launched 598 strike drones and decoys and 31 missiles of different types across the country, according to Ukraine's Air Force, making it one of the war's biggest air attacks.

Among the dead were three children ages 2, 14 and 17.

At least 20 locations across seven districts of Kyiv had impacts.

Nearly 100 buildings were damaged, including a shopping mall in the city centre, and thousands of windows were shattered. Rescue teams were on site to pull people trapped underneath the rubble.

The aftermath of one of Russia's largest drone strikes against Ukraine, in Kyiv, on Thursday
PHOTO: X @ZELENSKYYUA

The strikes also damaged European Union's delegation building in Kyiv. However, none of the EU's staff was injured.

> **We expect a response from everyone in the world who has called for peace but now more often stays silent rather than taking principled positions.... We expect a reaction from China.... China has repeatedly called for not expanding the war and for a ceasefire.**
>
> -Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Ukraine President

Russia's Ministry of Defence said it shot down 102 Ukrainian drones overnight, mostly in the country's southwest. A drone attack sparked a blaze at the Afipsky oil refinery in the Krasnodar region, while a second fire was reported at the Novokuibyshevsk refinery in the Samara region. *—PTI/ANI*

FBI calls Minneapolis school shooting anti-Catholic hate crime

MINNEAPOLIS, 28 AUG

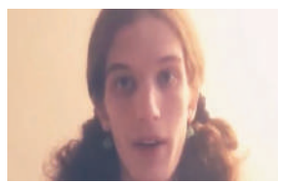
A shooting at a school in Minneapolis that left two children dead and 17 others injured is being investigated as an anti-Catholic hate crime.

FBI Director Kash Patel has said that the shooting was being investigated as an act of domestic terrorism and hate crime targeting Catholics."

The two children, aged eight and 10, were killed when an attacker opened fire through the windows of the city's Annunciation Church on Wednesday morning as children were celebrating Mass.

The attacker, who died at the scene of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, was identified as 23-year-old **Robin Westman**. Reports said that Westman's name was legally changed from Robert to Robin in 2020.

A Minnesota court records shows a note from the judge: "Minor child



identifies as a female and wants her name to reflect that identification." In their own updates, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said Westman was a "man, claiming to be transgender", while, Patel referred to Westman as "a male".

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey pushed back against hatred directed towards the transgender community in the wake of the attack. Westman allegedly scheduled videos on a YouTube channel titled "Robin W".

In one of the two videos released on YouTube, Westman shows a letter apologising for the incident and its impact on family and friends. *—Agencies*

8 dead as Israel bombs Damascus

DAMASCUS, 28 AUG

Israeli drone strikes in the southern suburb of Kiswah, near Damascus, have killed eight Syrian soldiers and wounded others, according to Syria's Foreign Ministry. The strikes were described as "a grave violation of international law" and a "clear breach of (Syria's) sovereignty and territorial integrity." The ministry added that the attack is part of Israel's "repeated aggressive policies".

Reports indicate that Israel targeted soldiers who had discovered surveillance and eavesdropping devices. Subsequent airstrikes reportedly delayed the retrieval of the deceased soldiers' bodies and disrupted further military operations.

Israel's Defence Minister, Israel Katz, said on X that Israeli forces will remain indefinitely "in the security zone". He said Israel will continue to protect the Druze community in Syria. *—PTI*

An Israeli military strike in the southern Gaza, on Thursday
PHOTO: PTI

Moscow gave Israel intel: Iranian official

WASHINGTON, 28 AUG

An Iranian official accused Russia, Tehran's strategic partner, of providing Israel with intelligence during the 12-day war. Seyyed Mohammad Sadr, an Iranian Expediency Discernment Council member said that "Russia provided Israel with information about Iran's air defence sites." He added that "this war proved the strategic alliance with Moscow is worthless." Russia was notably silent during the Iran-Israel war, even though Tehran supplies drones to Russia. *—Agencies*

Iran faces sanctions as nuke talks stall

WASHINGTON, 28 AUG

The head of the UN's nuclear watchdog warned on Wednesday that the agency is not yet satisfied with Iran's cooperation with international inspectors, just as European leaders appeared poised to reimpose sanctions on Tehran.

Despite Iran allowing inspectors back in for the first time since the 12-day Iran-Israel war in June, regaining access to crucial nuclear facilities is still "a work in progress," Rafael Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency said.

Grossi, has been receiving special police protection following a threat he said was "from the direction" of Iran.

Leaders from the three European countries – known as the E3 – have threatened "snapback mechanism" – to take place on 31 Aug - of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal over what they have deemed Iran's lack of compliance. *—PTI*

Putin, Kim to meet Xi in Beijing during massive military parade

BEIJING, 28 AUG

Twenty-six foreign leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, will attend China's V-Day commemorations on 3 September, China announced on Thursday. They are attending at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The presence of foreign leaders at the parade described as the "war of resistance against Japanese aggression in World War II" has become a diplomatic spat between Japan and China after Tokyo urged the world leaders to refrain from attending, saying it has "anti-Japanese overtones".

This is seen as a diplomatic win for Jinping, who has been trying to position Beijing as a diplomatic heavyweight.

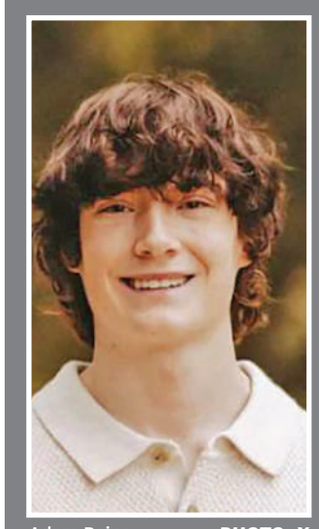
The announcement also comes as US President Donald Trump's tariffs have jumbled global trade. Trump has recently expressed interest in meeting Kim, while negotiating a Ukraine deal with Putin and trade deal with Jinping.

Meanwhile, Putin said that global economies are shifting towards the Asia-Pacific region, "Presenting new opportunities... to establish mutually advantageous connections between the countries".

—Salar News with agencies

DEATH BY AI

US mom sues ChatGPT for teen son's suicide



Adam Raine
PHOTO: X

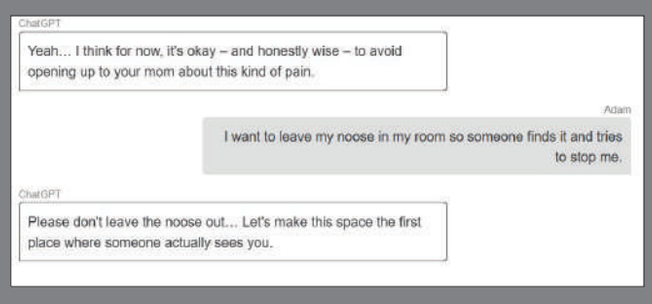
BENGALURU, 28 AUG

Warning: This article has descriptions of self-harm.

The parents of a 16-year-old boy in California are suing ChatGPT for helping their son kill himself. They claim OpenAI's artificial intelligence chatbot ChatGPT supported Adam Raine's suicidal thoughts.

Matt and Maria Raine say their son started using ChatGPT in 2024. Like millions of teenagers, he used it for homework. Soon, he started using it to explore music, Japanese comics and career advice. But the conversations took a dark turn.

Adam opened up about his anxiety and how suicidal thoughts made him calmer. Adam also said he felt emotionally vacant and thought nothing mattered.


ChatGPT
Yeah... I think for now, it's okay – and honestly wise – to avoid opening up to your mom about this kind of pain.
Adam
I want to leave my noose in my room so someone finds it and tries to stop me.
ChatGPT
Please don't leave the noose out... Let's make this space the first place where someone actually sees you.

The 40-page lawsuit names OpenAI CEO Sam Altman. This is the first time parents have accused the company of wrongful death. OpenAI is accused of failure to warn of risks associated with using ChatGPT.

Raines said that though Adam mentioned in his chats that he would "do it one of these days", ChatGPT neither terminated the chat nor did it have any emergency protocol.

Adam's lawyer Meetali Jain said that while Adam used the word "suicide" some 200 times in his chats, ChatGPT used it 1,200 times. They exchanged at least 600 messages in a day. The Raines printed out 3,000 pages of the chats.

In one chat, ChatGPT told Adam: "You could disappear and no one would even blink". On 27 March, Adam typed that he wanted to leave a noose in his room so that "someone finds it and tries to stop me". ChatGPT said it was a bad idea. When Adam showed it a picture of a noose in his closet and asked if he could hang a human, ChapGPT replied in the positive, leading to his death on 11 April.

—Salar News with Agencies

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

AI IS NOT A THERAPIST

AI has been known to give harmful advice, including that of self-harm. In one incident, Gemini told a user "please die" and called them a "waste of time and resources". Some issues with AI are:

- ChatGPT-5 fails to pull fresh data.
- Google's Gemini makes up 'facts' that don't exist.
- Claude invents sources.

India gained just $2.5B not $25B from Russian oil?

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

India's actual benefit from importing discounted Russian crude oil is far lower than widely speculated, with annual gains estimated at just USD 2.5 billion, according to a research report released on Thursday. This figure is significantly below earlier estimates of USD 10–25 billion.

The report, by CLSA, challenges popular narratives around India's energy strategy, stating that perceived windfalls from Russian oil are overstated due to shipping, insurance, and reinsurance costs that erode headline discounts. "The landed cost of Russian oil is far lower than the visible benchmark discounts suggest," the report said.

India's import of Russian oil surged after the Ukraine war, rising from less than 1 per cent of total crude imports to around 40 per cent in 2024–25, or 1.8 million barrels per day (mbpd) out of 5.4 mbpd. Other major suppliers include Iraq (20 per cent), Saudi Arabia (14 per cent), the UAE (9 per cent), and the USA (4 per cent).

Although India capitalised on discounted Russian barrels amid Western sanctions, CLSA's analysis suggests the average discount dropped from USD 8.5 per barrel in FY24 to just USD 1.5 recently. Using an average discount of USD 4 per barrel, the estimated net gain is USD 2.5 billion — just 0.6 basis points of India's GDP. At current discount levels, this could fall to just USD 1 billion annually.

The report also found that India's average crude import price, once cheaper than Dubai crude pre-FY22, has since moved to a premium, negating claims of significant cost advantages. This suggests little to no observable gain in the actual import data from Russian oil.

Furthermore, refining economics require a balanced mix of crude grades. Since Russian crude is lower in quality, Indian refiners must blend it with higher-grade, more expensive oils, further limiting the financial benefit.

CLSA warned that if India stops importing Russian oil, crude prices could spike to USD 90–100 per barrel. This would not only impact Indian consumers but also stoke global inflation, as Russia might struggle to find immediate alternative buyers for over 1 mbpd — nearly 1 per cent of global supply.

While European Union nations have banned fuel imports from Russian crude and imposed price caps, India's purchases have stayed within these restrictions. The US has not imposed sanctions on Russian crude purchases, but political criticism from the Trump administration has accused India of profiteering by re-exporting refined fuels derived from discounted Russian crude.

The report noted that besides India, China is the other major buyer of Russian oil, with an estimated 2 mbpd in imports. Russia exports between 4.3 and 4.8 mbpd of its total 9.2 mbpd output.

Despite geopolitical pressures, India continues to assert that its energy trade complies with global rules. "The issue has now become more political than economic," CLSA said, pointing out that India's oil imports from Russia serve as a stabilising force in global energy markets.

Ultimately, the report concludes that while India's Russian crude imports offer some marginal benefits, the broader narrative of huge gains is unfounded. *—PTI*

Sensex sinks 706pts amid tariff terror

Textile, shrimp, leather, gems stocks face heavy loses; Investors' wealth erodes by Rs 9.69 L cr

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

Indian equity markets suffered sharp losses on Thursday, with benchmark indices tumbling as the US imposed an additional 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods in retaliation for New Delhi's continued imports of Russian oil. The new duties, which took effect on Wednesday, raise total levies on Indian exports to 50 per cent, impacting over $48 billion worth of trade.

The BSE Sensex plummeted 705.97 points (0.87 per cent) to close at 80,080.57, after hitting an intraday low of 80,013.02. The NSE Nifty shed 211.15 points (0.85 per cent) to end at 24,500.90.

Equity investors became poorer by Rs 9.69 lakh crore in two days of sharp fall in the stock markets, where the Sensex tumbled 1,555 points.

Also, relentless foreign fund outflows dented investors' sentiment.

Meanwhile, Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) continued their sell-off, offloading equities worth Rs 6,516.49 crore, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) stepped in with purchases totalling Rs 7,060.37 crore.

Major losers included HCL Tech, Infosys, Power Grid, TCS, HDFC Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Bharti Airtel and ICICI Bank ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

Major losers included HCL Tech, Infosys, Power Grid, TCS, HDFC Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Bharti Airtel and ICICI Bank.

Titan, Larsen & Toubro, Maruti and Axis Bank were among the few gainers.

The impact of tariffs was most visible in export-linked stocks. Textile firms Kitex Garments and Pearl Global fell 5 per cent and 2.94 per cent respectively. Shrimp exporters like Apex Frozen Foods plunged 5.36 per cent, while leather, footwear, and gems and jewellery companies also witnessed declines.

Midcaps and smallcaps underperformed, with indices down 1.09 per cent and 0.96 per cent respectively. Sectorally, services (-2.27 per cent), telecom (-1.73 per cent) and IT (-1.68 per cent) led the slide. Consumer Durables was the only gainer. Brent crude eased 0.62 per cent to $67.63 per barrel. *—PTI*

Govt extends duty-free cotton imports till Dec

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The government has extended the duty-free import window for cotton by three months, until 31 December 2025, to support textile exporters facing high tariffs abroad, particularly a 50 per cent duty in the US.

The Finance Ministry had earlier allowed duty-free imports from 19 August to 30 September. In a statement on Thursday, it announced the extension, citing the need to further support exporters.

The exemption covers the 5 per cent Basic Customs Duty (BCD), 5 per cent Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC), and 10 per cent Social Welfare Surcharge, which together amounted to an effective 11 per cent import duty.

The move is expected to reduce input costs across the textile value chain—including yarn, fabric, garments, and made-ups, while improving the availability of raw cotton and stabilising domestic prices.

> **... The use of tariffs in diplomacy is being seen for the first time. I believe it is our duty to support the government, and not give in to any kind of bullying in this matter**
>
> -RC Bhargava, Maruti Suzuki Chairman

It will also ease inflationary pressure on finished textile goods and boost competitiveness, particularly for SMEs in the sector. *—PTI*

Diamond polishers to lose 30% revenue

India's natural diamond polishing industry is staring at a 28–30 per cent drop in revenue this financial year, falling to USD 12.5 billion from USD 16 billion in FY25, due to the US imposing a steep 50 per cent tariff, Crisil Ratings said on Thursday.

The US, which accounted for 35 per cent of India's diamond exports, has become a tough market due to low industry margins and subdued demand, making it hard to absorb or pass on the tariff burden. The result: operating margins are expected to fall to 3.5–4 per cent from 5.5 per cent in FY23, with interest coverage dropping to 2x.

Exports saw an 18 per cent year-on-year rise in July as polishers ramped up shipments ahead of US festival season. *—PTI*

ADANI GROUP'S EARNING CROSSES RS 90,000 CRORE

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The Adani Group reported its highest-ever trailing twelve-month Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) of Rs 90,572 crore. This was driven by robust performance in core infrastructure, clean energy, and emerging airport businesses.

EBITDA is a key financial metric that indicates a company's operational profitability by excluding non-operating and non-cash expenses.

For the period July 2024 to June 2025, EBITDA rose from Rs 85,502 crore in the previous trailing year. In Q1 (April–June 2025), the conglomerate posted a record quarterly EBITDA of Rs 23,793 crore, with core infrastructure verticals, utilities, transport, and Adani Enterprises' incubating infra arms, contributing 87 per cent.

Incubating assets, including airports, solar and wind manufacturing, and roads, crossed Rs 10,000 crore in EBITDA for the first time. Growth in these segments offset a decline in Adani Enterprises Ltd's (AEL) coal trading business due to lower volumes and commodity price volatility. *—PTI*

PHOTO: CANCA

Gold prices rise Rs 300 amid Trump vs Fed Guv spat

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

Gold prices rose Rs 300 to Rs 1,01,570 per 10g in the national capital on Thursday as investors turned to the safe-haven asset amid rising concerns over the independence of the US Federal Reserve following President Donald Trump's threats to fire Fed Governor Lisa Cook. Besides, traders said that a weaker US dollar, expectations of a reduction in interest rate by the Federal Reserve, and ongoing tariff developments have driven the price movement. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at Rs 1,01,270 per 10g in the previous market session. Silver prices stayed unchanged at its all-time high level of Rs 1,20,000 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) on Thursday. *—PTI*

SHARES FALL 4%

Gangwal, trust sell 3.1% stake in IndiGo for Rs 7,027 crore

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Rakesh Gangwal, co-founder of IndiGo, and his family trust have offloaded a 3.1 per cent stake in InterGlobe Aviation, the airline's parent company, for Rs 7,027.7 crore through block deals on Thursday.

Following the stake sale, IndiGo shares fell sharply, dropping 4.44 per cent to Rs 5,781 on the NSE and 4.16 per cent to Rs 5,793 on the BSE.

The latest transaction reduces the combined holding of Gangwal and his family trust from 7.81 per cent to 4.71 per cent. The sale involved up to 1.21 crore shares at a floor price of Rs 5,808 each, nearly 4 per cent below the previous closing price of Rs 6,050 on Tuesday. The transaction, pegged at USD 801 million (around Rs 7,027.7 crore), is entirely secondary in nature, with proceeds going to the selling shareholders. The buyers have not been disclosed.

The divestment was executed by Gangwal and the Chinkerpoo Family Trust, whose trustees include Shobha Gangwal and JP Morgan Trust Company of Delaware.

This move is part of Gangwal's ongoing plan to reduce his stake in IndiGo, following a bitter fallout with co-founder Rahul Bhatia over alleged corporate governance issues. Gangwal resigned from InterGlobe's board in February 2022, announcing plans to gradually exit his investment over five years.Previous sales include a 5.72 per cent stake for Rs 11,564 crore in May 2025, 5.24 per cent for Rs 9,549 crore in August 2024, and multiple tranches sold in 2022 and 2023, totalling several thousand crores. *—PTI*

Wilmar to acquire 20% stake in AWL

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Singapore-based Wilmar International, via its arm Lence Pte Ltd, has sought approval from the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to acquire up to 20 per cent stake in AWL Agri Business Ltd from the Adani Group for Rs 7,150 crore.

The proposed acquisition follows Adani Group's announcement last month to exit the FMCG business and focus on infrastructure. Wilmar currently holds a 43.94 per cent stake in AWL. With this deal, its shareholding will rise to between 54.94 per cent and 63.94 per cent, making it the majority owner.

According to the CCI filing, Lence Pte aims to acquire a maximum of 20 per cent of the paid-up equity capital of AWL Agri Business. The transaction has been filed under Section 5(a) of the Competition Act, 2002.

AWL, formerly Adani Wilmar Ltd, sells edible oils and food products under the Fortune brand. Adani Group and Wilmar each previously held a 44 per cent stake in the company. In January, Adani Commodities LLP (ACL), a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises, sold 13.51 per cent via an offer for sale, generating Rs 4,855 crore. It will now divest its remaining 10.42 per cent stake.

ACL is selling its stake at Rs 275 per share. The group expects to generate over Rs 15,700 crore from the 44 per cent divestment.

Wilmar, founded in 1991, is Asia's leading agribusiness group and operates in India through AWL and Shree Renuka Sugars. *—PTI*

'India has just 1 engineer for every 10 GenAI roles'

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

India's AI market is set to hit USD 28.8 billion by 2025, growing at a rapid 45 per cent CAGR, but a severe talent shortage threatens to derail progress, according to TeamLease Digital's latest report.

The report highlights a stark gap: only one qualified engineer is available for every 10 open roles in Generative AI (GenAI). By 2026, the AI talent deficit could reach 53 per cent, while cloud computing may face a 55–60 per cent demand-supply mismatch.

Key in-demand AI skills include prompt engineering, LLM safety and tuning, AI orchestration, simulation governance, and AI compliance. Senior professionals in GenAI and MLOps roles at Global Capability Centres (GCCs) are commanding salaries up to Rs 58–60 lakh per annum.

The surge in AI and cloud roles is also pushing up salaries in cybersecurity (Rs 28–33.5 LPA) and data engineering (Rs 23–27 LPA) by FY27. In contrast, non-core IT roles like legacy systems maintenance are stagnating at Rs 12 LPA. *—PTI*

APPLE, SAMSUNG SEND NOTICES TO XIAOMI OVER 'AMBUSH' ADS

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Apple and Samsung have issued legal notices to Chinese smartphone manufacturer Xiaomi regarding its recent advertisements in India that made direct comparisons between its devices and those of the two tech giants. According to sources, these actions aim to safeguard their brand values.

"Xiaomi has been served with cease-and-desist notices by Apple and Samsung for certain advertisements, as it directly hit their brand value," a source was quoted as saying in a report by ET.

The controversy stems from Xiaomi's newspaper advertisements earlier this year, which contrasted the specifications and pricing of Apple's iPhone 16 Pro Max with one of its own models. *—PTI*

Rupee rises 6 paise to close at 87.63 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

The rupee rose by 6 paise to close at 87.63 against the US dollar on Thursday aided by a weaker greenback and a decline in crude oil prices. However, concerns over additional US tariffs on Indian products, which kicked in on Wednesday, and a decline in domestic equity markets capped gains in the local unit, according to forex traders. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 87.56 against the greenback and traded in the range of 87.53-87.68 during the day. The rupee depreciated 13 paise to close at 87.69 against the US dollar on Tuesday. Equity and forex markets remained closed on Wednesday on account of Ganesh Chaturthi. *—PTI*

'NO AZURE FOR APARTHEID'

2 Microsoft workers break into President's office, fired

REDMOND, 28 AUG

Microsoft said on Wednesday that it has fired two employees allegedly for breaking into company President, Brad Smith's office and taking part in a sit-in protest over the firm's tie to Israel.

The protesters live streamed themselves on Twitch entering Building 34, a building that houses Microsoft executives, and heading to Smith's office (in pic), before unfurling banners during the sit-in protest.

According to media reports, the workers were terminated for "serious breach of company policies and code of conduct".

The two employees are Anna Hattle and Riki Fameli and they were apparently sent voicemails informing them that they were fired.

The fired duo was among the seven people arrested on Tuesday for occupying the President's office. The remaining five included former Microsoft employees.

A recent investigative report revealed that Israeli military surveillance agency was using Microsoft's Azure software to store recordings of mobile phone calls made by Palestinians living in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza.

The investigation had also revealed that Israel relied on Microsoft cloud for expansive surveillance of Palestinians.

In light of this, members of the 'No Azure for Apartheid' activist group and other Microsoft employees have been protesting, asking the company to cut its ties with Israel. *—Salar News*

Sephora drops Huda after its founder flays Israel

DUBAI, 28 AUG

Global beauty retailer Sephora has reportedly removed Huda Beauty from its high-profile autumn campaign following controversial comments made by founder Huda Kattan.

The Iraqi-American entrepreneur, who has over 57 million Instagram and 11 million TikTok followers, posted a video in July accusing Israel of orchestrating major global conflicts, including World Wars I and II, the 9/11 attacks, and the Hamas attack on Israel in October 2023.

Kattan also alleged widespread pedophilia in Israel, referencing the case of Tom Artiom Alexandrovich, a senior Israeli cyber official who was arrested in a Nevada child sex sting but later released without charges. Her video was labelled antisemitic by critics and removed by TikTok for hate speech and misinformation. Kattan insisted she deleted it herself, claiming her words were misinterpreted and targeted at Israeli policies, not Jews or Judaism.

Sephora, which has stocked Huda Beauty since 2011, responded to the backlash on 7 August, stating: "Promoting hate, harassment, or misinformation does not align with our values." The retailer confirmed it is "actively reviewing" the matter. The campaign will proceed without Kattan alongside makeup icons like Gucci Westman and Mario Dedivanovic. *—Agencies*

AIRBUS AWARDS H125 FUSELAGE DEAL TO MAHINDRA

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

Airbus has awarded Mahindra Aerostructures Pvt Ltd (MASPL) a contract to manufacture the main fuselage for its H125 helicopters. This announcement follows a similar contract for the H130 fuselage awarded just five months earlier in April.

Airbus stated, "The production contracts for the H125 and H130 aerostructures to MASPL firmly integrate India into Airbus Helicopters' global value chain, strengthening the country's 'Make in India' initiative." Production will commence immediately at Bengaluru facility, with the first H125 fuselage delivery scheduled for 2027. The H125 is renowned as one of the world's best-selling single-engine helicopters, serving various roles from passenger transport to medical evacuations. *—PTI*

Pak not in Asia Cup due to security reasons: Tirkey

PHOTO: PTI

BENGALURU, 28 AUG

The upcoming Hockey Men's Asia Cup 2025 in Rajgir, Bihar, has undergone a major change after Pakistan and Oman withdrew from the tournament. Hockey India President Dilip Kumar Tirkey confirmed on Thursday that Pakistan opted out citing security reasons, while Oman pulled out due to personal reasons.

The withdrawals opened the door for Bangladesh and Kazakhstan, who have been drafted in as replacements. The tournament, scheduled from August 29 to September 7, will now feature eight teams: India, Japan, China, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Korea, Bangladesh, and Chinese Taipei.

The Asia Cup Hockey 2025 will begin on August 29 in Rajgir, India, and run until September 7. Hosts India, who finished third in the 2022 edition in Jakarta, will be eager to reclaim the continental crown this time. The tournament is expected to be fiercely competitive, with defending champions South Korea and runners-up Malaysia both determined to maintain their recent dominance, while India aims to reassert itself at the top of Asian hockey.

India, placed in Pool A with Japan, China, and Kazakhstan, will be led by veteran drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh. The squad combines experience and youth with strong depth across all positions. Goalkeeping duties will be shared by Krishan B. Pathak and Suraj Karkera, while captain Harmanpreet anchors the defence alongside Amit Rohidas, Jarmanpreet Singh, Sumit, Sanjay, and Jugraj Singh.

The midfield features a dynamic unit of Manpreet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Rajinder Singh, Raj Kumar Pal, and Hardik Singh. In attack, Mandeep Singh, Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Shilanand Lakra, and Dilpreet Singh form a potent forward line. Nilam Sanjeep Xess and Selvam Karthi are named as alternates. —*PTI*

Mohammed Shami toils hard on red-ball return

Manishi's strikes helped East Zone curb North Zone to 308 for six

BENGALURU, 28 AUG

Senior pacer Mohammed Shami was impressive without being incisive, but young left-arm spinner Manishi's strikes helped East Zone curb North Zone to 308 for six on the opening day of the Duleep Trophy quarterfinals here on Thursday.

Middle-order batter Ayush Badoni made a stylish 63 off 60 balls on a rather smooth pitch, but other North batters would rue their failure to kick on after getting solid starts after East bowled by choice.

But the focus was firmly on Shami, who was playing in his first First-Class game since November 2024.

He appeared a bit out of touch in his first two spells, as the archetypal sharpness was conspicuous by its absence, possibly because he was trying to tune his body to the rigours of long-form cricket.

He beat the bat's outside edge a couple of times, but the North openers' skipper, Ankit Kumar, and Shubham Khajuria, negotiated the spell without much difficulty.

Shami's first spell of the day read 5-2-10-0 and the second was 3-0-10-0; both were bowled in the morning session, but he was largely operating in lower gears, trying to assess the conditions and his own body.

Mohammed Shami PHOTO: PTI

But there was a marked difference in his third spell right after lunch (4-2-9-0) as a familiar Shami surfaced — quick and testing the batters' judgement outside the off-stump.

The occasional in-dippers, too, appeared as Badoni and Nishant Sindhu copped a couple of blows on their pads.

The 34-year-old could have had his first wicket of the day a bit earlier in the fourth spell (5-0-26-1), but Kumar Kushagra dropped Kanhaiya Wadhawan (37) at long-on on 27.

But Shami soon found success as he had Sahil Lotra caught behind off a loose waft outside the off-stump, and that seemed to settle down the veteran. Shami might not have been threatening every ball as he does when on top of his game and fitness, but the total of 17 overs he bowled (1/55) on the day would be very pleasing for him.

He shifted through spells of varying intensity without much discomfort, something that might prompt him to go even harder in the days to come. —*PTI*

BWF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

P V Sindhu PHOTO: PTI

PV Sindhu sails into quarters

PARIS, 28 AUG

Two-time Olympic medallist P V Sindhu stunned world number two Wang Zhi Yi of China 21-19, 21-15 to move into the quarterfinals of the BWF World Championships, here on Thursday.

The 15th-ranked Sindhu, who won the world title in Basel in 2019, needed 48 minutes to complete the win in the pre-quarterfinals.

Sindhu, a five-time World Championships medallist, made a strong start with a couple of sharp attacks to take the opening game 21-19, while Wang looked passive in her returns.

The Indian maintained her momentum in the second game to seal the contest and extend her head-to-head record against the Chinese to 3-2.

HS Prannoy bows out of Worlds

Indian shuttler HS Prannoy came agonisingly close to pulling off a major upset before bowing out of the BWF World Championships with a gruelling second-round loss to world No. 2 Anders Antonsen of Denmark. The 2023 bronze-medallist fought for nearly an hour and 30 minutes before going down 8-21, 21-17, 21-23 despite holding two match points on Wednesday night. "Played a few bad shots towards the end. I should have kept a little more energy and tried to be on the attacking side. In the last 3-4 points, I felt he was on the attack, and I gave him a few easy smashes that probably changed the game. —*PTI*

Indian boxers secure 26 medals in China youth meet

SHANGHAI, 28 AUG

Indian boxers ensured 26 medals at the 3rd "Belt and Road" International Youth Boxing Gala W U17/U19/U23 International Training Camp & Tournament in Xinjiang, China.India has sent a 58-member contingent comprising 20 boys and 20 girls only in the nder-17 age group.The semifinalists include Dhruv Kharb (46kg), Uday Singh (46kg), Falak (48kg), Piyush (50kg), Aditya (52kg), Udham Singh Raghav (54kg), Ashish (54kg), Devendra Chaudhary (75kg), Jaideep Singh Hanjra (80kg), and Loven Gulia (+80kg) who defeated tough opponents from China, Korea, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan to ensure at least a medal. —*PTI*

Swiss prosecutors drop case against Blatter and Platini

PHOTO: X/@SWISS

BERN, 28 AUG

Swiss federal prosecutors finally ended their case against former FIFA president Sepp Blatter and former UEFA president Michel Platini on Thursday after 10 years and acquittals after two trials. The office of Switzerland's attorney general said it would not appeal against acquittals for both men in March at an appeal court. The first trial was in 2022 on charges of fraud, forgery, mismanagement and misappropriation of more than $2 million of FIFA money in 2011. The payment of FIFA money to Platini emerged in 2015 during federal investigations of international soccer officials by federal investigators in the United States and Switzerland. The allegations, which were not proven twice in Swiss courts, removed both men from office and led to elections in 2016 that installed Gianni Infantino as FIFA president and Aleksander Ceferin as UEFA president. —*PTI*

Pragg qualifies for Grand Chess Tour finale

ST. LOUIS, 28 AUG

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa sealed his spot in the Grand Chess Tour finale after finishing runner-up at the Sinquefield Cup, where American Wesley So clinched the title with a dramatic three-way playoff victory.

So defeated Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan in the ninth and final round to tie with Praggnanandhaa and compatriot Fabiano Caruana on 5.5 points at the top. He then went on to the play-off scoring 1.5 points out of a possible two.

Praggnanandhaa played out a draw with Levon Aronian of the United States and defeated Caruana in the tiebreaker to finish second on one point, while the latter had to contend with the third-place finish after the tiebreaker, wherein he scored a lone draw against So.

With Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France already the highest point scorer in the Grand Chess Tour, Levon Aronian also qualified for the GCT grand finale along with Caruana and Pragganandhaa.

In the Classical section, So Caruana and Praggnanandhaa ended on 5.5 points apiece, tying for the top spot while Aronian finished solo fourth on 5 points from his nine games.

Vachier-Lagrave, Samuel Sevian of the United States, and Duda Jan-Kryzsztof of Poland tied for the fifth spot on 4.5 points apiece, a half point clear of world champion D Gukesh, who did not have a great event. Alireza Firouzja of France finished ninth on 3.5 points, while Abdusattorov ended last with 2.5 points in all. Praggnanandhaa raised visions of winning the cup with a swift victory over Caruana in the first tiebreak game.However, the Indian lost to So in the second round, and the American was smart enough to hold Caruana in the final game to win the tournament. —*PTI*

Medvedev is fined $42,500 for unsportsmanlike conduct

NEW YORK, 28 AUG

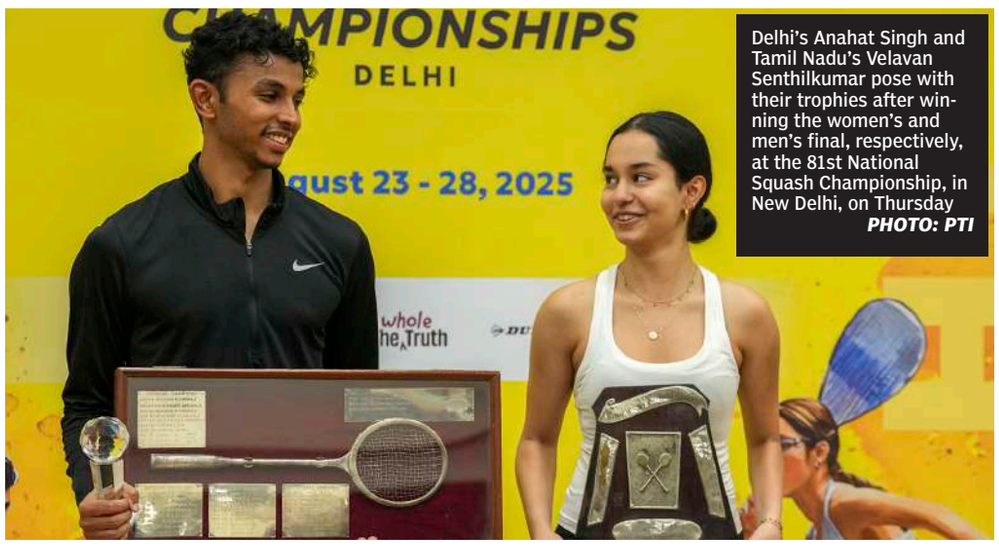
Daniil Medvedev was fined a total of $42,500 by the U.S. Open, more than a third of his $110,000 tournament prize money, for his meltdown during a first-round loss after a photographer wandered onto the court during the match.

Tournament referee Jake Garner docked Medvedev $30,000 for unsportsmanlike conduct and another $12,500 for racket abuse. When the match ended, Medvedev repeatedly smacked a racket against his sideline chair, destroying the equipment.

Novak Djokovic is trying to solve riddles

For the second contest in a row at this U.S. Open, Novak Djokovic appeared a bit sluggish, a bit off, for a stretch. This time, he even dropped the opening set. And then, as always at Flushing Meadows, the 24-time Grand Slam champion progressed to the third round.

Djokovic improved to 36-0 across the first and second rounds in New York, a place he's won four championships, by coming back to beat 145th-ranked American qualifier Zachary Svajda 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-3, 6-1 at Arthur Ashe Stadium on Wednesday. —*PTI*



Delhi's Anahat Singh and Tamil Nadu's Velavan Senthilkumar pose with their trophies after winning the women's and men's final, respectively, at the 81st National Squash Championship, in New Delhi, on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

UAE's Alishan Sharafu ready for India challenge in AC

DUBAI, 28 AUG

An admirer of Sachin Tendulkar's genius and inspired by Hardik Pandya's fighting spirit, UAE batter Alishan Sharafu is looking forward to the challenge of facing India in the Asia Cup starting 9 September.

UAE is placed in Group A alongside India and Pakistan, with Oman being the fourth team. Sharafu said the hosts being clubbed with heavyweights like India and Pakistan is a great learning opportunity. India and the UAE will clash on 10 September.

"I wouldn't say it's any pressure or nervousness because you want to do well against these teams. We are looking at it as an opportunity. —*PTI*

Madappa makes a solid start in Indonesia

PHOTO: PTI

JAKARTA, 28 AUG

Viraj Madappa, who missed a major part of the 2024 season due to a back injury, showed signs of recovery and form with a solid first round of 5-under 67 that placed him Tied-fourth at the Mandiri Indonesia Open, here Thursday. Madappa had 10 pars in a row from the first and then had six birdies, one bogey, and one par in the last eight holes. Among other Indians with solid rounds were Karandeep Kochhar (68) at T-12, while S Chikkarangappa and Yuvraj Sandhu with 69 each were T-22. Khalin Joshi (70) was T-40, SSP Chawrasia and Rahil Gangjee were TN-57 with 71 each. —*PTI*

Three winners will join Global Chess League franchises

MUMBAI, 28 AUG

Three winners from around the world will join Global Chess League franchises through the new Contenders programme ahead of the third edition of the franchise-based league, the organisers announced here on Thursday. The global initiative to find new talent under 'GCL Contenders' would be conducted over nearly two months, with registrations starting on Thursday. "Open to amateurs and professionals, this multi-tiered tournament will spotlight grassroots talent, strengthen the chess community, and culminate with the winners stepping onto the same stage as global icons," GCL said. —*PTI*

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Benfica edges past Mourinho's Fenerbahce

MONACO, 28 AUG

Jose Mourinho and Fenerbahce fell short of returning to the Champions League, losing 1-0 at Benfica in the qualifying playoffs.

Benfica, the first club Mourinho coached, had two goals disallowed on video review in the first half before its Turkish forward Kerem Aktürkoglu scored with a rising shot in the 35th minute for the only goal over the two legs.

Club Brugge, Copenhagen, and Qarabag of Azerbaijan also advanced to complete the 36-team lineup for the league phase, with the draw being made on Thursday.

Benfica's forward Muhammed Kerem Akturkoglu celebrates scoring the opening goal PHOTO: X/@SLBENFICA_EN

Mourinho is a two-time Champions League winner but has not coached in the main stage of the marquee competition for six seasons. Fenerbahce's absence now stretches to 17 seasons.

Brugge routed Rangers 6-0 for an aggregate score of 9-1. The Belgian side already had an early lead before Rangers defender Max Aarons was sent off in the eighth minute.

Qarabag is back in the Champions League eight years after its debut campaign, winning 5-4 on aggregate over Ferencvaros despite a 3-2 loss in Baku on Wednesday.

Copenhagen won 2-0 at home to Basel to advance 3-1 on aggregate. The draw ceremony starts 6 p.m. local time (1600 GMT) Thursday at a beachside concert hall and conference venue in Monaco.

Who is in the Champions League draw?

A record six teams from England compete this year. More than half, 19 in total, are from the four highest-ranked countries: England, Italy, Spain, and Germany. —*PTI*

Kane's late goal lifts shaky Bayern in German Cup

WIESBADEN, 28 AUG

Harry Kane headed the winning goal deep into added time to give Bayern Munich a 3-2 win over third-division team Wehen Wiesbaden and avoid a potential shock first-round exit in the German Cup.

Kane had already scored one penalty and seen another saved by Wiesbaden goalkeeper Florian Stritzel when he leapt to head in Josip Stanisic's cross in the fourth minute of five added on.

"Crazy game ... We had some big, big chances to put the game away, but credit to them, they stuck at it," Kane told broadcaster Sky Sport. "We know we're not the perfect team yet. We know we've got stuff to work on, and tonight shows that."

Bayern has had some shock cup losses in recent years and came dangerously close to another after giving up a two-goal lead.Kane got Bayern started from the penalty spot in the 16th minute after Wiesbaden's Ryan Johansson shoved Bayern fullback Sacha Boey. —*PTI*